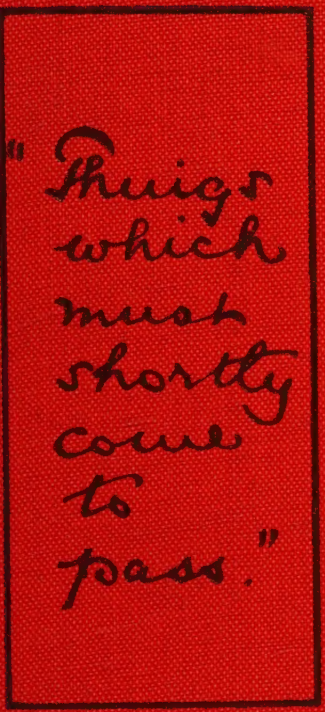

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FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION.

1918

This present work has been produced as the result of an earnest request from Australia, couched in terms which hardly admitted of a refusal.

The deep interest taken in prophecy at the present time, the need of something brief and simple, yet exhaustive as to the **main outlines** of the subject, were reasons urged. The reader may now judge if this need has been met.

Many Christians, anxious for enlightenment on these subjects, and who have not the time in these days of business stress and pressure to master long and exhaustive treatises, we trust will find this book just what they want.

Whilst dispensational truth and prophecy generally have been touched upon, the reader will find the following pages are mainly a brief exposition of the Book of the Revelation and of the prophetic parts of the Books of Daniel and Zechariah.

A special effort has been made by the judicious use of letterpress and diagrams to make the subject matter clear and easily grasped.

It is with great pleasure that we acknowledge our indebtedness to Mr. James Green for kindly preparing the maps, which appear at the end of the volume.

The writer lays no claim to originality. He has freely availed himself of the help other writers have furnished on these subjects.

The reader must be prepared for a measure of repetition in these pages. For instance, in explaining Revelation we get help in comparing it with Daniel; in explaining

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Daniel we get help in comparing it with Revelation, etc., etc.

That God may graciously use these pages to the help of many of His people is the desire and fervent prayer of the writer.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE,
November, 1918.

SECOND EDITION.

That a second edition of this book is called for shows a steady interest in prophecy among God's people. Since it first made its appearance, many events of the greatest importance have taken place, pointing to fulfilment of prophecies bearing on the last days. It is interesting that quite a number of events, which threw their shadow sufficiently clearly on the dial of time, when the first edition was being written, have materialized.

We have revised sparingly, but have brought information up to date.

November, 1936.

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"Things which must Shortly Come to Pass"

THE GREAT SUBJECT MATTER OF PROPHECY.

"THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY" (Rev. xix. 10), is a deeply interesting statement. It is one of the few sentences in Scripture which can be reversed. We can say equally well, "The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus."

It brings out a thought dear to every Christian who understands that prophecy has in all its parts a relation to Christ. This is true, whether the prophecy is direct or indirect as to Christ, whether it has to do with the Church, which is **His** body; the Jews, who are **His** earthly people; or the Gentiles over whom **He** will rule eventually as Son of Man. **HE is the Centre of prophecy, and all its predictions are related to that Centre.** That being so, how absorbingly interesting the prophetic word becomes.

Alas! the misuse of prophecy is not uncommon. Its details are too often discussed simply as appealing to the intellect—the conscience not exercised, the heart's affections not stirred. Let us ever remember that God never records **the past,** nor reveals **the future,** without designing to affect us by His word in **the present.**

To see how God will have all things headed up in Christ, to see aright how His ways in grace and government are all leading to this grand goal, is to secure these two things—a conscience exercised and affections deepened.

The mystery of God's will is in

> "[the] administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Eph. i. 10, N.T.).

God's will is made known to us, who have received His Holy Spirit; and to recognize the goal to which God is working is to help us in our present enquiry.

. . . . .

THREE WAYS IN WHICH PROPHECY IS PRESENTED.

There are three ways in which prophecy is presented—

(1) DIRECT PROPHECY.
(2) IN TYPE.
(3) BY BIOGRAPHY.

(1) **Direct Prophecy.**—This includes all direct statements as to future events. The first instance is found in Gen. iii. 15—

> **"It** [the woman's seed, that is Christ] **shall bruise thy** [Satan's] **head, and thou** [Satan] **shalt bruise His** [Christ's] **heel."**

How magnificently this was fulfilled when Satan, so far as his intention and purpose went, was instrumental in bringing about the death of Christ, though in reality the Lord surrendered Himself to the will of God at the cross. Satan's **apparent** triumph was but short-lived, for Christ rose triumphant the third day, having shattered his power, and fully atoned for sin. The right moment shall assuredly come when Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit and finally and for ever into the lake of fire. His head shall thus be bruised.

Let this suffice to explain what is meant by direct prophecy. The reader will recall many a prophecy on Old Testament page as to the coming Christ, His sufferings and His glory, that falls under this head.

. . . . .

(2) **In Type.**—All the types are prophetic in character. For instance, God clothing Adam and Eve with coats of skins was typical, and therefore prophetic. Sin had come

in. The sinner was naked. To obtain the needed covering the death of innocent animals had to take place, and with their skins (the skin constituting the beauty of the animal) the naked sinner was covered. Now the root meaning of the Hebrew word rendered "atonement" is **to cover.**

It is affecting that when sin came in, and the sentence of death was passed, the first death to take place was not that of the sinner in judgment, but of the innocent victim, the sacrifice, the substitute, thus showing forth God's intention to bless and save, and that **righteously.** The victims typified Christ in His wondrous sacrifice, the covering skins the wondrous atonement effected and its application to the needy sinner in righteousness.

Then, again, the Passover was prophetic. We are not left to guess this, but have the authority of Scripture for putting type and Antitype together.

> "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).

The tabernacle and its service in the wilderness, the temple and its service in the land, were all typical of Christ, His deity, His humanity, His life, His death, His resurrection, His glories, of the sinner's approach to God, of the believer's fitness for worship in His presence.

. . . . .

(3) **By Biography.**—The Bible biographies of Adam, Isaac, Joseph, David, Solomon, and many others, are in certain details prophetical of Christ.

Adam, the Head of the first creation, is typical of Christ, the Head of the new creation.

> "Adam . . . is the figure of Him that was to come" (Rom. v. 14).

Isaac is the type of the **heavenly** Christ. The first mention of love in the Bible is when God said to Abraham,

> "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, **whom thou lovest,** and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains I will tell thee of" (Gen. xxii. 2).

Does this not illustrate most beautifully the love of God

the Father to His well-beloved Son, and bring before us in type the great sacrifice that righteousness demanded and love provided?

The second mention of **love** is found when we read,

> "And Isaac brought her [Rebekah] into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife: **and he loved her**: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Gen. xxiv. 67).

This brings us to a beautiful picture of Christ and His Church, of Christ with His earthly links with Israel broken, typified in Sarah's death, and heavenly links formed with His Church, His bride, typified in Isaac's union with Rebekah.

Joseph is a beautiful type of Christ, in that he was loved by his father, hated by his brethren, sold for twenty pieces of silver, passing in figure through death and resurrection in his prison life in Egypt, and finally exalted to the place of rule and authority, becoming in figure the Saviour of the world.

Was not Christ loved by His Father, hated by His brethren the Jews, sold for thirty pieces of silver, did He not pass through death and resurrection; and will He not yet come forth as the Saviour and Ruler of the world for its peace and blessing in the Millennium?

David is typical of Christ in His rejection.

Solomon is typical of Christ in His exaltation and glory.

Moreover, much of the Psalms, which are in part autobiographical, at least of the feeling of the writers of the Psalms in their circumstances, are prophetic of the feelings of Christ. The writers clearly go again and again clean beyond what could be their own experiences.

The matchless Twenty-second Psalm is the most notable example of this. In it the sufferings of Christ are detailed in a most wonderful way. You can see, as it were, the nails being driven into His hands and feet, and the soldier-robbers gambling for His clothes at the foot of the cross. Without introduction or preamble the

Psalm opens with a sob. Right from a heart torn by anguish it comes.

> "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (verse 1).

Surely this was prophetic. One thousand years before the actual cry was uttered on the cross in all its desolating anguish by Christ, the Spirit of God used David to go far byeond his own experiences, thus to place on record a prophetic forecast of the story of the cross.

. . . . .

TWO GREAT THEMES OF PROPHECY.

The two great themes of prophecy in the Old Testament are—

(1) **"The sufferings of Christ"; and**

(2) **"The glory that should follow"** (1 Pet. i. 11).

"The sufferings of Christ" have all been fulfilled. "The glory that should follow" is future as to its manifestation to the world. And just as surely as the prophecies of "the sufferings of Christ" have been fulfilled, so surely will the prophecies of the coming glories be fulfilled.

Christianity stands or falls with the person of Christ. His claims are either divinely true, and overwhelming in their demand for acceptance on the part of everyone, or else they are the highest conceivable point of blasphemy ever reached. He is either "God . . . manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy iii. 16), supremely good and true, or else He is the greatest impostor that has ever sought to palm himself off on the credulity of mankind. There can be no question as to Him. He is what He said He was, the incarnate Word, "God manifest in the flesh," the Saviour of the world. There can be no other true conclusion.

Just in the same way the Bible stands or falls with Christ. Through the Bible we are made aware of His history, His claims, all that is set forth concerning Him. The Bible is either the best book in the world or the worst—the best, if it brings before us the true revelation

of God in Christ; the worst, if it be not true. Language utterly fails to extol the one, or to denounce the other. It is either superlatively good or intolerably bad. But the influence of the Book is only good. It is God's message to us, a message of supreme importance and blessing.

How then does the Old Testament, in which are found these two great themes spoken of in 1 Peter i. 11, present Christ to us? It has been well said that—

(1) **The Pentateuch gives us the** FIGURES of Christ;
(2) **The Psalms give us the** FEELINGS of Christ;
(3) **The Prophets give us the** FORETELLINGS of Christ;

and whether figures or types, or feelings, or foretellings, all are prophetic.

The New Testament gives us the fulfilment of the Old. Thus—

(4) **The Gospels give us the** FACTS **of Christ;**
(5) **The Epistles give us the** FRUITS **of Christ;**

Christ is THE great Figure in history, beside whom all others are as naught. He is the Incomparable, the Infinite, the Eternal.

There are over three hundred distinct prophecies of Christ scattered over the pages of the Old Testament.

It is possible to make a fortunate guess of a future event and claim for it the dignity of a prophecy, but every item added to the prophecy is a matter of geometrical progression, rendering it much more difficult of fulfilment, until by the addition of a very few items it becomes absolutely impossible of fulfilment on the score of **chance,** or of fortunate guess.

Suppose some five hundred years ago some one prophesied that in the nineteenth century a queen should reign over Great Britain and Ireland. This might without much stretch of imagination come true. But suppose the prophet said she would ascend the throne when she was eighteen years old, marry when she was twenty, become the mother of nine children, a widow at a compar-

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atively early age, and reign for over sixty years; that further, she should be born in Kensington Palace and die at Osborne House; and it all became true; then such a prophecy is clean lifted out of the region of chance, and becomes established beyond question as a prophecy of **foreknowledge.**

A PROPHECY OF FOREKNOWLEDGE.

In a far more wonderful way than our supposititious case the coming Christ was prophesied. Not one or two or six or eight items, as in the supposed case of Queen Victoria, but over three hundred; not the pronouncement of one prophet, but of many—Moses, the lawgiver; David, the shepherd-king; Isaiah, the eloquent prophet; Amos, the herdsman; Zechariah, the post-exilian prophet; Daniel, greatly beloved of God; Malachi, the last of the prophets; and many others; not uttered at one time, but extending over fifteen centuries—all this lifts the prophecy of the coming Christ into an absolutely unique place.

These three hundred prophecies, relating to Christ's Deity, His humanity, the place of His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection, have been happily likened to shafts of light of varying length, directed by different hands across the centuries and falling first of all on the face of a Babe in Bethlehem's manger and lighting it up, then on that wondrous life lived in Galilee and Judea, step by step lighting up the pathway of the Son of God, until we behold Him on the cross. The most wonderful prophecy of all was that of His own resurrection, a fact that is so strongly witnessed to by so many reliable witnesses and by the spread of Christianity as to render it beyond legitimate dispute.

Scripture after Scripture, as we read in the four Gospels, was fulfilled in the life of Jesus. As it has been well said, it were a far greater miracle for the four evangelists to have imagined the life of Jesus, a life that has fascinated even the perverted intellects of infidel writers such

as Renan and Strauss, than to have placed on record the actual life that was lived.

The Jews were so zealous and careful of their holy books that it is impossible to deny that these prophecies lay on the sacred page for centuries before they were fulfilled.

Aye, and the day cannot be far distant when the prophecies relating to the glories of the coming King will lighten up the face of the Son of Man in the cloud and follow Him down the golden age of the Millennium, which men are dreaming about and working for, but which cannot come till Christ ushers it in, and then the prophecies concerning the glory that should follow will be fulfilled. Then

> "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4).

The three hundred prophecies concerning Christ can all be searched out by the diligent student. They are all on the sacred page, and prove the inspiration of Scripture, as well as the person and work of Christ, in an irrefutable way.

It is well in studying brief outlines of prophecy to see that the great overwhelming prophecy of all is that relating to Christ, and that He has already fulfilled all that pertains to His sufferings—the glories to come awaiting sure fulfilment.

The great outstanding FACT of all time and eternity is Christ. We may well pause and ask the reader how he stands in relation to Him. Not only does the Scripture lay emphasis on His person, but on His mission into this world, and His work.

If the reader is unsaved, we beseech him to read through the Bible. Every Jewish sacrifice with its flowing blood emphasizes in prophecy the absolute necessity of the one great sacrifice of Christ.

"NOT WITHOUT BLOOD" (Heb. ix. 7),

is writ large over the whole book.

> **"Without shedding of blood is no remission"** (Heb. ix. 22),

is the truth of Scripture.

Has this no voice for you? Can you afford to be negligent of the claims of Christ? Surely, a thousand times no. Ponder well this stupendous fact. **Jesus, God's eternal Son, has died for** YOU. Death had no claim upon Him on His own account. His coming into the world was voluntary. He was the second Person of the Trinity, the uncreated Creator, the unsustained Sustainer of all things.

> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and THE WORD WAS GOD" (John i. 1).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "All things were made by Him" (John i. 3).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John i. 14).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "John bare witness of Him" (John i. 15).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29).

It is said that German prisoners, who were captured from the deep subterranean fortresses which they built on the Somme, were blanched, because for months they had been living away from the light of the sun, and were practically entombed in a damp dark prison.

What will be the result, my unsaved friend, if you live your life away from the light of God in time, and then, if you die unsaved, you must exist away from that light perforce for eternity? There is no room for Unitarianism in heaven, and none shall ever enter there but those whose robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

For a sinner with death and judgment lying straight in front of him there is no blessing save through Christ

and His glorious finished work. Be very clear on that point, we beseech you.

Let us quote one or two verses that may bring blessing to some anxious reader of these pages. In reading these verses remember very particularly that salvation is not of works, but of faith; that is, it is needful not only that Christ should have died for you, but that you should repent of your sins and bow in faith before the Lord Jesus, accepting Him as your personal Saviour.

In short, you must appropriate the blessing for yourself! Have you done this yet? Till you do you cannot be saved. We beseech you not to miss this wondrous blessing.

There is enough in these verses to make plain the way of salvation to every troubled soul. Just believe them as they stand.

> "It [is] impossible for God to lie" (Heb. vi. 18).

You may therefore rely implicitly on God's Word.

> "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).
>
> . . . . .
>
> To him that WORKETH NOT, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5).

How plain it is that it is **not** the sinner's doings and strivings that can save the soul. How true are the lines—

> "Cast your deadly doing down,
> Down at Jesus' feet;
> Stand in Him, in Him alone,
> Gloriously complete.
> 'It is finished,' yes, indeed,
> Finished every jot.
> Sinner, this is all you need:
> Tell me, is it not?"

We beseech you, make no shipwreck on this point. How many there are, who in their self-righteousness have refused to acknowledge that their own doings have no value in connection with their souls' salvation. All, all is

accomplished by Christ on the cross. There is plenty of room for works **after** salvation—works, which can be described as "works of **faith**" and "labour of **love**," **works** that are the **evidence** of salvation, works "that accompany salvation," but salvation is altogether of faith and faith alone.

Weigh well the following passages of Scripture—

> "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38-39).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John v. 13).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).
>
> . . . . .

Many more passages might be adduced. Let these suffice.

Happy will it be if the consideration of the wondrous prophecies of the Scriptures concerning Christ, and the way those prophecies have been fulfilled regarding His entrance into this world and His death, should lead any reader of these pages to true repentance before God, to the acknowledgment of the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to personal faith in Him. Thus only a happy knowledge of sins forgiven can be secured.

DISPENSATIONS.

WITHOUT a right understanding of dispensational truth no student of prophecy can rightly comprehend God's ways in the past and present, nor His plans for the future.

At the beginning of our enquiry we may well ask what is meant by the word **dispensation.**

A Dispensation is a stretch of time marked out by some special dealing of God with men—that dealing imposing upon man responsibility, and always ending in failure.

With this in mind it is easy to trace the dispensations of Scripture.

Perhaps it will help to make our meaning plain if we use a very simple diagram with descriptive letterpress.

. . . . .

Let it be clearly understood that whilst the **beginning** of a dispensation can be clearly marked, its **close** cannot be so definitely fixed in every case. The remark we make later in connection with the Dispensation of Promise illustrates what we mean.

. . . . .

DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE. This probably lasted a very short time. The record is covered by Gen. ii. 7—iii. 24.	Adam was created innocent. Placed as head over the first creation. Given a helpmeet. One test was imposed upon our first parents, viz., not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In their attempt to rise and become as gods they fell. Their act was prophetic of the rise of antichrist, who will make the greatest attempt to be as God. The dispensation ended in failure. It was closed by the fall of the creature and the introduction of the reign of sin.

DISPENSATION OF UNRESTRAINED WILL. —— Man was tested by the fact of no restraint being put upon him. The record is covered by Gen. iv. 1—vii. 6.	This followed the dispensation of innocence, and closed with the Flood. Man was allowed to do what he liked. And what was the result? He corrupted and defiled himself to such an extent that in mercy and judgment God ended the dispensation by a flood of water. Doubtless the closing of this dispensation by a flood of water is prophetic of the closing up of the world's history by a deluge of fire (see 2 Pet. iii. 10-12). How often the natural heart thinks that to do as it likes is the way of happiness. Behold the result!
DISPENSATION OF GOVERNMENT. —— Man had the sword of government put into his hand. The record is covered by Gen. viii. 15—xi. 9.	Noah and his family after the flood commenced this dispensation. Noah had the sword of government put into his hand. He proved himself unfit by getting drunk. He could not govern himself. In process of time population increased and the lessons of the flood were forgotten; men banded themselves into one vast imperialism in their desire to be strong without God. The dispensation ended with the intervention of God in confounding the language of all the earth, so that the people were scattered, and left off building the tower and city of Babel (**confusion**). This closed the dispensation.
DISPENSATION OF PROMISE. —— Beginning with the call of Abram and going on to the Exodus, though its principles still go on, and will find their full answer when all nations shall be	No words can exaggerate the importance of this new departure in the ways of God. Abram was the first person to be **called.** "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. xii. 1). Since his day **calling** has been God's way of blessing. The **calling** OUT was the proof that God no longer looked for response from the world as such, and was the condem-

DISPENSATION OF PROMISE.
(continued).

blessed in Abram's seed —Christ—in the Millennium.

The record is covered by Gen. xii. 1—Exod. xviii.

nation of that out of which the call was given.

Abram in this connection became the recipient of the promise that in his seed all nations should be blessed. Henceforth the calling and promise descended to Isaac and Jacob, which last became the head of the Jewish patriarchs, who in their descendants became the **called-out** nation, as we shall presently see.

All this was on the lines of an **earthly** calling in view of an **earthly** inheritance.

The Church comes in parenthetically with a **heavenly** calling, with a **heavenly** inheritance, but still on the lines of **calling.** The Greek word for church (**ecclesia**) means **called out.** Of that more anon.

Secondly, Abram was the first person in whom the truth of **justification** came out. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3).

So two NEW things come out in Abram: (1) **Calling**: positively, leading to God's thoughts of blessing for the one called; negatively, involving condemnation of the scene out of which he was called; (2) **Justification,** that is, complete clearance on the ground of faith in what Another was to do.

The Galatian epistle shows how Abraham is the Head of promise, and how all—Jew and Gentile—who put their faith in Christ are the children of Abraham and blessed with him.

It were well for the reader to seek to grasp this important departure in the ways of God brought out in this dispensation. Succeeding dispensations differ, yet the blessings first brought to light in Abraham are carried on, though in the present dispensation they connect themselves with a **heavenly** order of things, and go beyond what was seen in Abraham.

DISPENSATION OF LAW.

Connecting itself with Israel under Moses the lawgiver, Joshua, and the elders, the Judges and Kings, until the captivity.

The record is covered by Exod. xix.—2 Kings xxv.

This dispensation is strongly marked. It had to do with a called nation, and is one sad history of lapses into idolatry. As the result of idolatry—the flagrant breaking of the first and greatest commandment—Israel was set aside and Gentile dominion came in. Israel began with **theocracy**, that is, direct rule by God. When the Israelites demanded a king, God said to Samuel the prophet, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. viii. 7).

In the time of king Rehoboam, David's grandson, the kingdom was rent in two—Israel, comprising ten tribes, formed the Northern Kingdom; Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites and many Israelites who fell to Judah, forming Judah, the Southern Kingdom. The king of Assyria carried Israel into captivity in B.C. 740, whilst the king of Babylon carried Judah into captivity in B.C. 599.

DISPENSATION OF "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES."

(Luke xxi. 24).

The record is covered prophetically by Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image. It began with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and will end when Christ returns to this earth to put all enemies under His feet and to reign. The Stone cut out without hands, falling on the feet of the image and destroying it, gives us symbolically the end of the dispensation. (See Dan. ii. 31—45).

Idolatrous Israel being set aside as God's centre of dealing with this world, God now puts authority into the hands of the Gentiles. As this is a large subject and intimately connected with prophecy, we will content ourselves with this remark at present.

We shall have to see how there arises a dispensation of **grace** WITHIN this dispensation of **government**, which latter "the times of the Gentiles" really is. This dispensation of grace is connected with "the fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. xi. 25), and is consequent on the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus, the gift of the Holy Ghost and formation of the Church, closing with the rapture; then the Jew will again be taken up and become the centre of God's dealings with the earth.

But more of this in detail later on.

DISPENSATION OF THE MILLENNIUM. The record is given in Rev. xx. 4—6.	This covers the personal reign for one thousand years of the Lord Jesus as the long promised Messiah over Israel, and as Son of man over the whole earth. He will, indeed, be the Lord Emperor—King of kings and Lord of lords. This dispensation will fulfil the prophecy of 1 Pet. i. 11—"the glory that should follow." It will involve the return of the Jews to their land, and the break-up of Gentile power to make way for the reign of Christ. This will be taken up in detail later on.
THE FINAL PHASE. This cannot be called a Dispensation. The record is covered by Rev. xx. 7—10.	When the Millennium closes, God in His wisdom allows Satan to be released from the bottomless pit, who shall then go out to deceive the nations. This **INTERREGNUM** between the close of the Millennium and the beginning of the eternal state will be short, and is described in Rev. xx. 7-10. Satan will deceive the nations, gathering them to battle in numberless hosts. They will attack God's people, and Jerusalem's **last** siege will take place. Fire will come down from God which will devour His enemies —the devil himself being cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet will have been during the Millennium. This interregnum will be one of the strongest proofs possible that man's condition as fallen is hopeless. The long period of Christ's personal reign, and the withdrawal of the malign influence of the devil, will not suffice to alter men's hearts. God will be fully justified in winding up all things, and the prophecy of 2 Peter iii. 10, as to the heavens and the earth being destroyed by fire, shall be fulfilled.

THE ETERNAL STATE.

Then will succeed the eternal state. This is recorded in Rev. xxi. 1—8. It will consist of two parts—the new heaven and new earth wherein righteousness will dwell (see verses 1—4), and the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone in which the unbeliever will have his part (see verse 8).

Rev. xx. 11—15 gives us the last great session of judgment—the great white throne. Seeing the earth and the heaven will have fled away, there can be no more time, for these are marked by the two motions of the earth round the sun—its diurnal rotation on its axis giving the succession of night and day, and its orbit round the sun giving the seasonal successions and marking off year from year.

This gives the awfully solemn thought that the great white throne will be set up after time has ceased, and its judgment will be effected **in eternity and for eternity.**

The new heaven and earth will be the blissful side of the eternal state, where God shall dwell in complacency with His people—all the activities of time for ever ended.

> "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

GOD'S FOUR GREAT JUDGMENTS.

It will greatly help to the understnding of dispensational truth to be clear as to the above subject.

They are as follows:—

(1) The Judgment of sin at the cross.

(2) The Judgment Seat of Christ for believers (2 Cor. v. 10).

(3) The Judgment of the Living Nations (Matt. xxv. 31—46).

(4) The Judgment of the Wicked Dead (Rev. xx. 11—15).

The first took place at the cross, the other three are still future.

. . . . .

The second will affect believers only, and will take place after the Lord comes **for** His people, and **before** He comes with His people to set up His millennial kingdom.

. . . . .

The third will affect the nations, when evangelised by the Jewish missionaries, whom God will use to preach the Gospel of the kingdom after the Church of God has been caught up. It will be the session of judgment that will decide who, of those alive upon the earth, are to go into the kingdom of heaven in display, that is the millennial kingdom.

. . . . .

The fourth will affect the wicked dead, when raised at the second resurrection. It will take place in eternity—the resurrection, one of God's last acts in time—this judgment, His first recorded act in eternity.

. . . . .

Let us take each judgment in detail.

(1) THE JUDGMENT OF SIN AT THE CROSS.

Here we have the affecting thought of the spotless Son of God suffering in His own Person the awful penalty of sin; so that believers can say of Him, that He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). To grasp how fully God has been glorified and the need of the sinner met is of the greatest importance. Without it none can have solid peace with God.

. . . . .

(2) THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST FOR BELIEVERS. (2 Cor. v. 10).

Writing to the Corinthian believers, the Apostle Paul says,

> "We must all appear [be manifested, N.T.] before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

The above passage may appear to some of our readers to contradict a passage with which they have been familiar since their conversion. We refer to John v. 24.

> "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [**judgment,** N.T.]; but is passed from death unto life."

Is His word to go for nothing? Cannot we rest upon what **He** has said?

Certainly we can. John v. 24 will ever be true.

Then how are we to reconcile the two passages?

The answer is very simple. At the cross the **person** of our blessed Saviour came under the judgment of God in order that OUR **persons, as believers,** should never come into judgment. Carefully note that the word translated "condemnation" in John v. 24 should be rightly rendered "judgment." A man brought up for judgment might be condemned or not, as the result of his being

proved guilty or not; but John v. 24 teaches that we shall never come up even for judgment, so definite and complete is the clearance wrought out at the cross, measured alone by the position of Christ in glory.

The whole point lies in the answer, Who or what comes under judgment according to 2 Cor. v.? Not "who" but "what," is the reply; not our **persons,** but our **deeds** are to be judged or manifested.

An illustration will help.

We step into the assize court one day. We note its solemn setting—the judge upon the bench, the jurymen in their panel, the counsel in their seats, the policemen at the doors, and above all the prisoner in the dock.

It is a serious murder case, and the judge is summing up. How eagerly the poor prisoner listens. How tense his attention. He knows full well what is at stake—**his person.** If he is condemned he knows it means the gallows, death, and a felon's grave. We all understand the seriousness of an assize court under such circumstances.

A little later we find ourselves in a very different spot —a flower show. The exhibits are there and the exhibitors. Presently the judges are announced. Does their arrival produce in the breasts of the exhibitors the same feeling as the sight of the judge produced in the heart of the murderer? Certainly not. The flower-show judges have not come to judge **persons,** but **works**—not to judge **exhibitors,** but **exhibits**—not to administer **punishments,** but **awards.**

So with the judgment-seat of Christ. When it takes place our bodies, if we have fallen "asleep in Jesus," shall have been summoned by the mighty voice of the Son of God from the slumber of the tomb; or, if alive upon the earth, caught up, having been changed into the likeness of Christ's own body of glory (see Phil. iii. 20, 21), to be with Him in the Father's house, the fruit of the travail of His soul, presented to Himself as His glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (see

Eph. v. 27). Can there be any question as to our persons when, raised and changed by His mighty power, we are with Him, and like Him, and already in glory? Assuredly not!

But our **deeds** shall come up for judgment. One of two things shall happen as they are reviewed—we shall either be rewarded or suffer loss. The following passage helps to the understanding of this:—

> "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
>
> "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble;
>
> "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.
>
> "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
>
> "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 11-15).

Note six things:—

(1) **The foundation.**
(2) **Building good materials thereon.**
(3) **Reward.**
(4) **Building bad materials thereon.**
(5) **Loss.**
(6) **The individual saved "yet so as by fire."**

The Foundation.—This is Jesus Christ. Only **true** believers will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ as given in 2 Cor. v.

And if the consequences of the judgment-seat of Christ for the **true** believer are so solemn, where his **works** shall be manifested and judged in view of rewards, what must be the consequence of the judgment be for the unbeliever, where his **person** is to be judged? There can be nothing more solemn.

So the Apostle, with his soul filled with the awe of this, says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. v. 11); not only as to unbelievers in

the preaching of the Gospel, but as to believers by presenting the solemn truth as to the judgment-seat of Christ.

Not for one moment would we make light of the consequences of the judgment-seat even for the believer. In our illustration of the flower show all the exhibits are more or less praiseworthy, the super-excellent winning the prizes, but at the judgment-seat of Christ **all** the deeds of the believer—good and bad—shall be manifested. How inexpressibly solemn! To suffer loss is to lose for eternity. To gain, to gain for eternity.

Finally, the Apostle presents the love of Christ as the constrainng power. The death of Christ imposes upon those, who owe all their blessing to it, the obligation of no longer living unto themselves, but UNTO HIM who died for them and rose again.

Building Thereon.—Acceptable deeds, begotten and energized by the Holy Spirit of God, are likened to gold, silver, precious stones—materials that can stand the test of the fire. Such deeds will receive reward.

But if deeds are unacceptable, the product of the flesh, however subtle and outwardly good they may appear to be, they are likened to wood, hay, stubble—materials that cannot stand the test of the fire. Loss will be experienced —loss of time, loss of trouble, loss of the Lord's sweet approval, loss of reward—which might have been gain had the deeds been acceptable.

The Individual Saved.—An extreme case is stated, that of a man whose works are all to be burned up, yet it states clearly that he shall be saved "yet so as by fire." He gets clear by the fire of judgment consuming all that was wrong in his life. It is the precious blood of Christ **alone** that puts away our sin before the eye of God, but self-judgment clears us from them in our own conscience and practice. Let the solemn light of the judgment seat of Christ affect us daily in our lives, and influence our conduct continually.

Do not the above considerations amply confirm John v. 24—"shall not come into judgment"?

The Rewards.—These are not for heaven, but for the kingdom of heaven; not for the Father's house, but for earth. In short, rewards determine the believer's position in the millennial kingdom of Christ, and have nothing to do with his place in heaven. That is solely the result of the finished work of Christ.

But more of this in detail later on.

. . . . . .

(3) The Judgment of the Living Nations (Matt. xxv. 31—46).

After the rapture of the Church, God will again take up the Jew for blessing. By means of the activities of His grace on the one hand in reaching the Jew for blessing, and through the agency of the Jew presenting the Gospel of the kingdom for the acceptance of the Gentile, and permitting on the other hand His purifying judgments to afflict the world, God will prepare the world for the glorious advent of Christ to rule as Messiah over His ancient people and over the nations as the Son of Man.

No longer will the Gospel of the grace of God go forth. That Gospel, rejected by Christendom, will cease to be preached after the Church has been caught up at the second coming of Christ. The Gospel of the kingdom—that which was preached by our Lord and His apostles while He was upon this earth—will again be preached among all nations by the instrumentality of Jews reached and blessed in a special way to be His messengers. Just as John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ when He first came, so these Jewish converts may be likened to His forerunners in a general and secondary sense at His second coming.

The result of this evangelisation will be seen in the account of the judgment of the living nations in Matt. xxv. 31—46.

Those who receive the Gospel of the kingdom will form the "sheep" class, who shall stand on the right hand of the Judge and go into life eternal, that is, enter into the millennial Kingdom of Christ.

Those who reject the Gospel of the kingdom will form the "goat" class, who shall stand on the left hand of the Judge and go into everlasting punishment. This will take place at the close of all the tribulations that shall sweep over the earth in their purifying work, and be preparatory to the Lord setting up His millennial kingdom. So we read:—

> "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;
>
> "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.
>
> "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 41-43).

• • • • •

(4) The Judgment of the Wicked Dead (Rev. xx. 11—15).

This presents us with God's last session of judgment. It will affect the wicked dead—all those who have part in the second resurrection. The first resurrection finds all those who are Christ's raised, and this will take place a thousand years at least before the wicked dead are raised. The wicked dead will be raised **after** the little space of time when Satan, loosed from the bottomless pit, shall have made his last final attack on God's people at Jerusalem, the beloved city. The great white throne will be set up after the earth and heaven shall have fled away from the face of Him who sits upon the throne.

The Seer beholds in vision the awe-inspiring sight of the dead, small and great, standing before God—the books opened and the dead judged accordingly.

The result is solemn in the extreme:—

> "And death and hell [hades]were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
>
> "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Death is the **condition** of bodies apart from souls.

Hades is the **condition** of souls apart from bodies.

When dissolution takes place the body is in the condition of death; the soul in the condition of hades.

In **resurrection** death will deliver up the custody of bodies, and hades the custody of souls, and bodies and souls reunited are looked on as death and hades personified. It is in this way that the wicked dead raised and judged shall be cast into the lake of fire.

Death is not a place, but a condition.

Hades is not a place, but a condition. ??

But as death, a condition, demands a place for the body, the grave generally speaking; so hades, a condition, demands a place—for the believer "with Christ in paradise," for the unbeliever a place of torment as set forth in Luke xvi. 19—31.

The second death is not annihilation. Death never means annihilation. The first death does not mean annihilation—the soul survives and the body will be raised. The second death does not mean annihilation, but an eternal living death. In short, eternal punishment means eternal punishing. Solemn thought, yet Scripture clearly teaches it, and it is our wisdom to bow to Scripture and not raise in question God's justice. His ways are perfect and right.

"THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES."

THIS illuminating expression fell from the lips of our Lord, and is found in Luke xxi. 24. It refers to the time when, Israel being set aside because of idolatry, God ordained that the Gentile should hold the government of the world. It ends with that power being set aside because of its wickedness, and God in sovereignty bringing in the Jew for blessing under the reign of Christ in His millennial kingdom.

It is twice presented pictorially in the book of Daniel —once in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image as described in chapter ii. 31—45; and again in Daniel's vision of four beasts as described in chapter vii. 1—28.

The times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar. God allowed him to make Israel tributary. He dethroned Judah's king and carried away the people captive. From then till the Lord comes to reign "the times of the Gentiles" run their course. It is interesting and instructive to see why this was allowed, viz., because of Israel's idolatry, and later on continued because of their great sin in rejecting their Messiah.

Nebuchadnezzar was the first Gentile monarch to rule by divine right. The prophet Daniel addresses the Babylonian monarch with the words:—

> "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (Dan. ii. 37).

The times of the Gentiles run as follows, as typified by the great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, and by the four beasts as seen by Daniel in his vision.

(1) **Head of Gold = Lion = Babylonian Empire.**
(2) **Breast and Arms of Silver = Bear = Medo-Persian Empire.**

(3) **Belly and Thighs of Brass = Leopard = Grecian Empire.**

(4) **Legs of Iron, feet partly iron and partly clay = Fourth Beast = Roman Empire.**

Evidently the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar emphasized the outward appearance of these world empires, whilst that given to the prophet presented the inner characteristics.

The Babylonian Empire existed at the time of these visions, but nothing short of inspired prophecy could have foretold the fall of that mighty empire, and the rise of other empires, whose course lay absolutely untracked by mortal vision in the vista of the approaching centuries. Daniel affords, then, a very remarkable proof of inspiration.

Not much is said about the first three empires. The main attention of enquiry is naturally fastened on the fourth—the Roman Empire,—as it is that empire which comes into importance in the last days.

Note the descending value of the materials of the composite image, as seen in vision by Nebuchadnezzar.

GOLD,
SILVER,
BRASS,
IRON,
CLAY,

thus illustrating the gradual decadence of supreme power, which had, as its highest illustration, Nebuchadnezzar.

We would ask the thoughtful student to turn to Daniel vii. in reading the description of the four beasts as seen in Daniel's vision. Just as the materials descended in value in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so there is descending value seen in the beasts described in the prophet's vision.

Babylon.—Here we have majestic power presented to us under the figure of the lion; rapidity as set forth in the eagle's wings, but finally broken and subdued as seen in its being made to stand upon its feet as a man, and a

man's heart given to it (see Dan. vii. 4). This is illustrated in the history of Nebuchadnezzar himself.

Medo-Persia.—Here power is presented to us under the figure of a bear. The impression given is that of a ferocious unwieldy power, and the two parts of the empire not being equal, as the beast raised up itself on one side more than on the other. This was seen in that Persia was the predominant power in the Medo-Persian Empire.

Greece.—Here power is presented to us under the figure of a leopard, speaking of rapidity. To this was added the further symbol of four wings of a fowl, emphasizing the idea of rapidity, though inferior to **eagles'** wings as set forth in Babylon. This imagery was fulfilled by the rapid conquests of Alexander the Great, who died in his early thirties, whilst the four-headed appearance of the leopard answered to Alexander's empire being divided by his four generals after his death.

Rome.—The terrible character of this empire could not be symbolized by a likeness to any known beast. Daniel describes it as—

> "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all beasts that went before it; and it had ten horns" (Dan. vii. 7).

The wonderful Roman Empire was different from every empire that preceded it. It was not signalized by the complete autocracy of Babylon, for it passed through various phases of rule, that of kings, consuls, presidents, emperors, etc. Yet throughout all it was characterized by tremendous force and determination, coupled with a genius for taking time in which to call to itself ample power to deliberately carry out its purposes of aggrandisement.

It is this same beast that occupies the attention of the Apostle John. When he wrote, the three previous world-empires had passed into history, and he himself was a prisoner at Patmos in the power of the Roman Empire,

whose revival in a future day he foretold. If we put Daniel and Revelation together we shall see that both books refer to the Roman Empire.

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Dan. vii. 7, 8).

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon [Satan] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast" (Rev. xiii. 1—3).

It is instructive to note that whilst Daniel speaks of this beast as being "dreadful and terrible," John, the Seer, tells it was like a leopard as a whole, its feet bear-like and its mouth lion-like, thus showing that whilst the Roman Empire has its own distinctive features, it inherits the characteristics of the three preceding empires.

Daniel tells us that this beast had ten horns, and that a little horn arose before whom three of the ten horns were plucked up by the roots, thus leaving seven horns, whereas there had been ten.

John, the Seer, beholds the beast as having seven heads and ten crowned horns. Thus John and Daniel agree, each presenting the matter in hand in his own distinctive way.

We come now to an important and interesting enquiry: What is the meaning of the deadly wound being healed? There is no doubt, we think, but that John in vision beholds the **revived** Roman Empire, which is still future,

and which cannot come into definite existence till after the rapture of the Church. But whilst John sees it, as such, he does not, we think, ignore its past history. The Roman Empire will be resuscitated, and will not be a **new** thing.

The deadly wound, we believe, was the break-up of the imperial power of Rome by the Huns and Goths in the fifth century. For nearly fifteen hundred years the Roman Empire has not been in actual existence, though "the times of the Gentiles" are still running their course, as is very evident from the Saviour's words in Luke xxi. Palestine has been in Gentile hands from that day to this.

Before we answer our question, What is meant by the deadly wound being healed? we ask, Why has God allowed the Roman Empire to be broken up, necessitating its revival, for no such event as is betokened by the symbol of the stone cut out without hands smiting the feet of the image has ever taken place? It might be argued that the descent of the Huns and Goths into the Lombardy plain and their thundering at the gates of Rome itself might answer to this, but a careful reading of Daniel ii. 44, and vii. 9—14, incontestably points to **divine** interposition, and that no less a person than the Lord Jesus is referred to as "the stone cut out without hands," and that it is the Lord Himself who will set up the fifth world-empire, which shall stand for ever.

Why then has God allowed the Roman Empire to be broken up for the moment? We believe the answer is very obvious. It was (consequent on the rejection of Christ by the Jews) the time chosen of God to carry out His wondrous designs concerning the Church—designs which were the subject of purpose between the Father and the Son in the past eternity.

Just as God put the Jew aside **spiritually** because of his rejection of his Messiah, and introduced the Church into heavenly blessing, so God set aside for the moment the Roman Empire **governmentally** because of its crucifying

the Son of God, for we must remember that, although the Jews clamoured for His death, yet it was under the Roman power that He suffered.

We believe then the being wounded to death was the break-up of the Roman Empire, though the dispersal of the Jews among the nations, and the Holy Land passing under the sway of first one Gentile power and then another, have continued the times of the Gentiles until now.

Although the healing of the deadly wound, that is the revival of the Roman Empire, is subsequent by many centuries to its infliction, that is the break-up of the Roman Empire, the Apostle John does not ignore the latter as a great fact in history. He mentions it to draw attention to its healing, which is still future. Few things will be so dramatic and awe-inspiring as the revival of the Roman Empire, in other words the healing of the deadly wound.

The Roman Empire, when revived, will run its course under the power of the beast, the over-lord over vast territory, and will be energized by the dragon, Satan, until the stone cut out without hands strikes the feet of the image and destroys it, or as Daniel tells us,

> "I beheld till the thrones were cast down . . . I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. vii. 9 and 11).

How exact is the prophecy of our Lord in Luke xxi. He foretold the destruction of the Temple, and it took place exactly as predicted; He foretold the terrors of the siege of Jerusalem, and it was the worst in history for bloodshed. He prophesied that the Jews should be led captive among all nations, and volumes could be written to show how literally this has been fulfilled. The phenomenon of a people, thus scattered and down-trodden, preserving its identity along the centuries, is the marvel of the world's history which cannot be explained on natural grounds. He likewise prophesied that the holy city should

be trodden down of the Gentiles, and it has been, and will be till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Could prophecy be more exact and wonderful, proving beyond a doubt the inspiration of Christ and the Scriptures?

"THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES."

(ROMANS xi. 25).

THIS is a most significant expression, demanding a word of explanation. It stands in contrast to the blindness in part that has happened to Israel.

Israel, because of her rejection of her Messiah, is set aside and judicially blinded. The words of Isaiah, written centuries before, are fulfilled—

> "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.
> "Then said I, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate" (Isa. vi. 10, 11).

Just as "the times of the Gentiles" is a **political** term, referring to God's governmental dealings in the world, so "the fulness of the Gentiles" is a **spiritual** term, referring to God's ways in grace in this world. It is significant that the word **Gentiles** dominates both expressions.

In studying the Acts of the Apostles we see how the divine commission for the Apostles to be witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (see Acts i. 8) was carried out. Judaism is left to its unbelief and rejection of Christ. Chapters ii. to vii. inclusive give us the fulfilment of this to Jerusalem and Judea. "To the Jew first" is the divine order.

Satan, having secured the martyrdom of Stephen, proceeded to stir up great persecution of the Church at Jerusalem. But he outwitted himself. Like a child using a pair of bellows to blow out a spark, but who, instead, blows it into a flame, so Satan, instead of quenching the

light of the infant Church, did the very reverse by causing the disciples to be scattered abroad, for everywhere they went they preached the Word. Thus Philip found himself preaching in Samaria. This chapter viii. records. But even Samaria was not far enough afield for the energies of the grace of God, so we find Philip sent to the desert near Gaza in order to speak to an Ethiopian, who in his turn carried the Gospel to his native land.

But in connection with Stephen's death we find a striking character introduced—the young man, Saul. The arch-persecutor of the Church was destined to be the arch-propagator of the Gospel and the zealous founder of new churches. If he persecuted even unto strange cities, we shall see him evangelizing even unto strange countries. So chapter ix. gives us the conversion of this remarkable man, and his early labours at Damascus and Jerusalem, and his escape to Tarsus.

Then the curtain falls for the moment upon Saul, and Peter comes into prominence again. But let it be grasped how this Apostle of the circumcision is presented to us. Chapters x. and xi. narrate very fully how the prejudiced Peter was made willing to go to Caesarea in order to preach to the **Gentile** Cornelius and his **Gentile** friends. That God should use the Apostle of the circumcision on this service was divinely wise, inasmuch as he convinced Peter, the chief of the **Jewish** Apostles, of the rightness of the work among the Gentiles, and through him carried the rest with him in this conviction. What a victory for the grace of God when the narrowness of the exclusive Jewish heart was widened out to go to the Gentile.

The next important point to notice is in chapter xiii. There the Antiochan prophets and teachers, as directed by the Holy Ghost, separated Barnabas and Saul for the work of the ministry. Here a new and striking departure took place. Jerusalem is set aside, and from a Gentile city these servants of God are sent forth. And where do they go? Their divine Master was sent to "the lost

sheep of the house of Israel." But was the scope of His death limited to the Jews? No; we read:

> "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the **world**" (1 John iv. 14).

The divine scope of His death is thus indicated here. We find Barnabas and Saul immediately going to such places as Seleucia, Cyprus, Pamphylia. True, in the main they ministered in the synagogues, but the way was being prepared for the Gentiles.

Chapters xiii. and xiv. form one long record of Gentile places visited by the energy of these servants of Christ. In chapter xv. Peter again comes to view in connection with the attempt to bring in Judaizing principles in connection with the Gospel. Jerusalem is the scene of the remarkable conference to discuss this matter, and its result is to release the infant Church from looking to Jerusalem for guidance or control, and setting her free to seek it from her glorious Head in heaven. Nor is Peter's name once mentioned after this chapter. The word "**Gentiles**" is the predominant word of the narrative. Let us quote the passages referred to:—

> "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that **the Gentiles** by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (verse 7).

Here the Apostle refers to the great epoch when he preached the Gospel to Cornelius and his friends.

> "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among **the Gentiles** by them" (verse 12).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit **the Gentiles,** to take out of them a people for His name" (verse 14).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "That the residue of men might seek after **the Lord, and all the Gentiles**" (verse 17).
>
> . . . . .

> "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from **among the Gentiles** are turned to God" (verse 19).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are **of the Gentiles** in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia" (verse 23).

So the circle of blessing starts from the centre, Jerusalem, moves on to Judea, passes thence to Samaria, and then through the tireless energy of the great Apostle and his companions widens out to the very ends of the earth.

The Apostle Paul was called as the Apostle of the Gentiles, and fulfilled that ministry far and wide. Judaism bitterly opposed him in this. As he made his defence on the castle stairs at Jerusalem he was listened to in "great silence" till he came to the point where he told how the Lord had given him his commission.

> "And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence **unto the Gentiles.**
>
> "And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live" (chap. xxii. 21, 22).

Such is man's heart. To hear that a man was commissioned by God to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles sufficed to provoke an outburst of bitter bigotry and hatred.

And thus we run through the Acts of the Apostles till we come to the last chapter, where the Jews refuse the testimony of Paul, and he says to them:—

> "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent **unto the Gentiles,** AND THAT **THEY** WILL HEAR IT" (verse 28).

"The fulness of the Gentiles" refers then to the spiritual blessing of the Gentile, consequent on the setting aside of the Jews because of their rejection of Christ. Its operation is described by Simeon:—

> "How God at the first did visit **the Gentiles,** to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14).

God is not blessing nationally either Jew or Gentile, but saving men and women out of the world. The very word

for Church—**ecclesia**—means **called out,** and this calling out is what God is doing at the present time.

"The fulness of the Gentiles" will be complete when Christ comes to catch up His church, His called-out ones, and then God will begin to deal with His ancient people again for earthly blessing.

But in the meantime one glance will tell us that the light and energy and blessing of the Gospel lie in Gentile hands, and not in Jewish. That Gentiles should form missionary societies to the Jews is proof enough of the state of things. But when the Church is caught up "the fulness of the Gentiles" will be complete. We shall then see the Jew evangelizing the Gentile again.

"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

THE expression, the "Kingdom of Heaven," does not refer to heaven as such, but to the rule of heaven **over the earth.** It will be seen that corruption and false profession find their place in the Kingdom of Heaven, and such will assuredly not find a place in Heaven.

WHEN DID THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BEGIN?

Was it known in Old Testament times? Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, as he interpreted his dream, prophesying that monarch's approaching insanity, that the judgment was sent to humble his pride, and in order to teach him "that the heavens do rule."

This was not the Kingdom of Heaven, but meant the governmental rule of God over the world. Our inquiry will show that the Kingdom of Heaven has a **spiritual** significance.

When did it begin? One verse settles the question. The Lord said:—

> "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. xi. 11).

And again:—

> "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke xvi. 16).

These two verses prove that John the Baptist was not in the Kingdom of Heaven, but that though never in it himself, yet his preaching prepared the way for it. Let it be at once grasped that there could be

NO KINGDOM WITHOUT FIRST A KING,

and that John was the forerunner of the King. But seeing that the King is rejected, the Kingdom is **in mystery** now,

as it will be **in display** when Christ rules as the King of Israel and as the Son of Man over the whole world.

It may be noted that the term "Kingdom of Heaven" only occurs in Matthew's Gospel, which thus presents its dispensational character, whilst the expression, "Kingdom of God," occurring in all the Gospels, especially in Luke's, and running through the Acts of the Apostles and occurring in the Pauline Epistles, presents more often the truth in a moral character, though in some cases the expressions cover the same ground, as the context proves.

THE KINGDOM IN MYSTERY.

That the Kingdom should take this character was necessary because of the rejection of the King. When Christ takes His rightful place it will be in display.

Matthew xiii. is the great chapter which indicates the course of the Kingdom of Heaven **in mystery.** It consists of seven parables, which fall into three divisions. The first parable stands by itself, then the three following form the second division, and the last three the third division. The chapter begins:—

> "The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side" (verse 1).

This action of His was symbolic, "the house" signifying Judaism, "the sea side" the nations of the world. His attitude indicates a new departure in the ways of God. Christ turns His back upon Judaism as such; it had rejected the rightful King, and He indicates a new line of action in this parable.

Notice, it is the only one of the seven parables that does not begin with the expression, "The Kingdom of Heaven is likened." The reason of this is because it is by the sowing of the seed of the Kingdom that the Kingdom is formed.

Hitherto Jehovah had been seeking fruit from Israel; now He is no longer seeking, but is giving, and that not to Judaism only, but to the whole world. It is not a

question now of seeking fruit, but sowing seed to produce fruit. We do not need to go into the details of this beautiful parable: it speaks for itself.

The next three parables present the Kingdom in mystery in its **outward** form or aspect. The parables are as follow:—

(1) THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.
(2) THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.
(3) THE WOMAN, THE MEAL, AND THE LEAVEN.

. . . . .

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

The good seed is sown: that is God's blessed indestructible work. The enemy sows tares: that is Satan's work. Note that the enemy's work was done "while men slept." Thus it has ever been that man fails when responsible in God's things.

Note, too, that the wheat and the tares are **individuals.** This brings out the outward aspect of the Kingdom in that Satan has succeeded in introducing **mere** professors into the Kingdom.

Many Christians think this Scripture warrants them in sitting down with the unconverted at the Lord's supper, seeing that the exhortation is to let both wheat and tares grow up till the time of harvest, and not to pull up the tares at once. But the field is the world, and not the assembly. This contention thus falls to the ground.

Doubtless the **true** children of the Kingdom to-day are also **true** members of the Church of God. But the Church of God is the place of holy discipline, where no unconverted person should have the privilege of the Lord's supper. The exhortation to let both wheat and tares grow together to the end does not refer at all to the discipline of the Church, but to the deferring of judgment until the time of the end. The time of harvest refers to the moment when Christ shall set up His Kingdom in display.

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The Grain of Mustard Seed.

Here we have that which we are told is the least of all seeds, growing into a tree, and the fowls of the air lodging in its branches. This presents to us the **pretentious** character of Christendom, for the Kingdom of Heaven and Christendom are identical until the Lord comes for His Church, when the Kingdom will take a different character, or rather it will not then be modified by the truth of this present Church dispensation.

The Church of Rome, with its papal arrogance, its display of worldly pomp and glory, its ceaseless scheming after world-empire, affords a good example of this pretension, though all, who forget that, till Christ gets His place, the Christian has no place in the world save that of "stranger or pilgrim," evidence in greater or lesser measure the same thing.

* * * * *

The Woman, the Meal, and the Leaven.

This parable emphasizes the fact that evil doctrine would be introduced into the Christian profession until the whole is permeated. A woman taking the lead in divine things is very generally a sign of evil, and it is significant that women have been notorious for this. Take the case of Mrs. White, a neurotic, hysterical woman, who was the chief prophetess of Seventh Day Adventism; of Mrs. Eddy, likewise neurotic, hysterical, and a spiritualistic medium, the founder of Christian Science; of Mrs. Blavatsky, a spritualistic medium, the introducer of modern Theosophy; of Mrs. Besant, the erstwhile infidel, her successor; of Ann Lee, of Shaker fame, etc., etc. Take Jezebel, as referred to in Rev. ii. 20, and whose spiritual significance is delineated in chapter xvii., as a case in point.

Leaven in Scripture is always a type of evil. It was to be put out of the dwellings of the Israelites. Christians are exhorted:—

> "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. v. 8).

Again, the Apostle Paul, vehemently combating the Judaizing principles that were imperilling the very foundations of Christianity, so that he could say that even if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than the true one, he should be accursed, says:—

> "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. v. 9).

And following the history of the Christian profession, is it not true that evil doctrines have permeated everywhere? Take the evil doctrines of the Church of Rome as to penances, purgatory, etc.; the higher criticism and ritualism of the Establishment; the rationalism of Dissent; the fearful delusions of latter days, of Millennial Dawnism, Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, Christadelphianism, Mormonism, Theosophy, and the like—the general breaking down of truth on every hand—does it not all fulfil this parable?

How comforting—amid all the sorrow of seeing Christendom getting worse and worse, preparing for its awful and final plunge into the abyss of apostasy—it is to know that Christ foretold it all, and that the very present state of things must be if the Scriptures are true.

. . . . .

The last three parables present the Kingdom in mystery in its **inward** aspect. The parables are as follow:—

(1) THE TREASURE.
(2) THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.
(3) THE DRAG NET.

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To grasp clearly the significance of these we must enlarge on

The Threefold Division of the Seven Kingdom Parables.

These are very obvious. The first parable—constituting the first division—illustrates the way the kingdom is formed. It begins by what is real. Though the response may vary—some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold—yet it is all God's work at the start. The three following—constituting the second division—are uttered in the hearing of the multitude by the sea side, and present to us the **outward** appearance of the kingdom of heaven; that is, as (1) containing, through the enemy's efforts, **false** as well as real; as (2) taking a pretentious worldly form opposed utterly to the Divine purpose for this age, that is, the King rejected and a kingdom in mystery; and as (3) being leavened by evil doctrine.

The last three parables—constituting the third division—and the explanation of the preceding three are given by the Lord in the privacy of the house after the multitudes have been sent away—the house here, not representing Judaism as in verse 1, but showing that the information given as to the three preceding parables, and of the three closing parables, could only be understood by those in relation to God when withdrawn from the world.

It is the Lord's significant action of (1) changing His position, and (2) of limiting His explanation of the parables to His disciples that marks the division between the two sets of parables, besides the distinctive line of teaching that marks each set, a line of teaching which is on the surface.

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The Treasure.

The field is the world. There is a treasure hid in it. A man finds it, and for joy thereof sells all that he has and buys the field.

Observe, not a word of failure as to men or methods comes in here. We believe that in the figure of the treasure we have a picture of **all** those who share in the blessing that comes to light through the death of Christ. True it is that the Old Testament believer does not enter into

a Kingdom which could only begin with a rejected Christ, but in the resurrection they will be raised, **and as resurrected** will have their part in the Kingdom of Heaven on the heavenly side of it. They can never have part in the Kingdom **in mystery,** for they passed off the scene before that kingdom came into being, but they will have their part in the Kingdom **in display.** Luke xiii. 28 proves this.

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The Pearl of Great Price.

Notice again, not a word as to failure is found in this short but incomparably beautiful parable. The merchant man is seeking goodly pearls, when finding one pearl of great price which eclipses everything else, he sells all that he has and buys it.

In this we see a picture of the Lord Jesus. He seeks goodly pearls, and will **find** THEM. By this we believe are indicated different classes of believers—the Jew in the day to come, for instance, the Gentile nations blessed in view of the Kingdom in display.

But one pearl of great price eclipses everything, and nothing more is said about the goodly pearls He was seeking. The pearl of great price we believe to represent the Church, that peculiar treasure for the heart of Christ, that mystery of members gathered from both Jew and Gentile united to Christ as the living Head in heaven—a mystery hid from all ages, but now revealed in God's word.

The **true** Kingdom in mystery in this dispensation is only composed of those who are members of Christ. A Jewish believer to-day finds himself as much in the Church of God as a Gentile believer.

Whilst Kingdom principles and Church principles run on different lines, yet it is true that the Kingdom in its outward profession is to be found in Christendom; whilst in its reality its true members are likewise members of the Church of God.

And this modifies some things as to the Kingdom. For instance, we do not preach "the Gospel of the King-

dom"—the Kingdom Gospel, which was preached by Christ and the Apostles before the day of Pentecost, and which will be preached again after the rapture. We preach "the Gospel of the grace of God," which takes people morally out of the world, giving them **heavenly** hopes and destiny.

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The Drag Net.

In this final parable we have the first note of anything evil in connection with this last series, but on examination it will be seen that it is the good, and only the good, that is in view. The drag net of the Gospel encloses every kind of fish. There is the true believer and the false professor, the good fish and the bad. Mark, it is the fishermen and not the angels that do the sorting out in verse 48. God has got the good before Him. The good are put into vessels; the bad cast away, and taken no further account of by the sorters. No further action towards the bad is taken by the fishermen.

We are reminded that this is on similar lines to the angel's work at the end of the age. But there is this vital difference. There the angels are used to carry out the judgment of the wicked, who shall be cast into the place of wailing, but in the case of the fishermen it is the preserving of the good in vessels that is their object.

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The Parable of the Ten Virgins.
(Matt. xxv. 1—13).

The ten virgins represent the whole mass of **professing** Christendom, the Kingdom of heaven at the present moment. Five have no oil, mere professors; five have oil in their vessels with their lamps, and are not only professors, but true professors, possessors indeed.

They all, awakened by the midnight cry, go forth to meet the Bridegroom. Only the five wise go in to the marriage. They do not go in as representing the Church,

but as true and faithful believers. The marriage, too, is connected with Messiah and Israel, the joy of the Lord in gaining His earthly Bride. The whole parable has an earthly setting, in keeping with the whole teaching as to "the Kingdom of Heaven."

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THE REWARDS OF THE KINGDOM.

(Matt. xxv. 14—30).

The rewards of the Kingdom determine our place, not in heaven, but in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, that is, in the Kingdom in display.

Heaven is connected with sovereignty, and the grace of God. The title to it is not in ourselves, but in the grace of God on the righteous basis of the work of Christ. All believers have equal entrance. **"The Kingdom of Heaven"** has to do with responsibility and government, with our conduct down here, which receives its due reward or otherwise at the hands of the King.

Of course the Church will sit with Christ on His throne as His Bride, the nearest and most exalted position, but in our **individual** responsibility we meet our just deserts, whether of praise or blame, in the coming Kingdom.

What an incentive to holy living and earnest service!

THINGS NEW AND OLD.

We read that the Lord said:—

> "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure **things new and old"** (Matt. xiii. 52).

The scribe in studying the Old Testament Scriptures was familiar with the glowing prophecies of the Kingdom of Heaven—a kingdom having for its centre the Jew, and through the Jew extending to the Gentile nations. He expected the glory of the reign of the Messiah. They were "the things old," known for long centuries.

But the Lord brought out what was "**new**"—the Kingdom in mystery, and going out **now** not only to the Jew, but to every nation for blessing.

The sowing of the seed in the field **of the** WORLD was an idea the scribe had not hitherto had. Now an instructed scribe would bring out of his treasures "things new and old."

Notice **new** comes **before** old, for the **old** is still future, still to be fulfilled, whilst the **new** came into actual existence as the Lord proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom, and it became effective in souls.

The **old,** that is the Kingdom of Heaven in display—first in conception and last in manifestation—will come to pass when Christ sets up His millennial Kingdom.

SHORT SKETCH OF JEWISH HISTORY.

We have seen how the history of the Israelites practically began with the Exodus, and how it ran its course till the whole of the twelve tribes found themselves in captivity in Assyria and Babylonia as the result of their idolatry, and how never since then have they reverted to the state of things when God recognized them nationally. Ever since then power and government have been centred by God in Gentile hands.

The prophet Jeremiah foretold that their captivity in Babylon would last seventy years, whilst 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21 tells us the captivity was

> "to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years."

Lev. xxv. 4 tells us that God ordained that every seventh year should be a sabbath of rest unto the land. Now if seventy years of rest were given, it looks as if the land had not received its septennial year of rest for four hundred and ninety years. Seeing that Judah was carried away captive B.C. 610, four hundred and ninety years before that would bring us to B.C. 1100. This was just about the date when the children of Israel clamoured for a king, and when God said, "They have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them."

This captivity ran practically the whole length of the Babylonian Empire. With a new régime, that of Persia, the way was opened for a change of policy. But would such a change naturally come about? What monarch, especially in those rough days, would care about the fate of a subjugated and captive race?

We come now to one of those remarkable interventions of God that witness to His care for His own word and people. Isaiah xlv. 1 and 4 tells us—

> "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden . . . For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me."

The date given for Isaiah's prophecy is B.C. 712. The date for the first year of the reign of Cyrus is B.C. 536, or 176 years between Isaiah's prophecy and the start of Cyrus' reign. Thus God distinctly raised up a deliverer for His people—Gentile though he was—in the person of Cyrus, even naming him long before his birth. So we read in Ezra i. 1—4:—

> "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,
>
> "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.
>
> "Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God) which is in Jerusalem.
>
> "And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."

The effect of this was that the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, and all those whose spirit the Lord stirred up, responded to the invitation. Moreover, Cyrus brought forth the vessels of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple, and restored them to the custody of this remnant in order that they might carry them back to Jerusalem. Nearly fifty thousand thus returned on this occasion.

Reaching Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel (an ancestor of our Lord according to the flesh) and Joshua, the High Priest, the foundation of the temple was laid. The old men, remembering the glories of the former house, Solomon's temple, wept, whilst the young men, only knowing the revival of God's interests, shouted for joy. But alas! the adversary succeeded in hindering and stopping the work.

Sixteen years passed between the edict of Cyrus and the second year of the reign of Darius, when God stirred up the returned Jews by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah to go on with the work of building the temple. An attempt to stop the work caused Darius to inquire into the matter, the result being that he definitely confirmed the decree of Cyrus, and thus the work prospered, until in B.C. 516 the temple was completed, and dedicated with great rejoicing.

Encouraged by this, we find Ezra the priest, with some of the children of Israel, priests, Levites, etc., arrived in Jerusalem. We read of some fifteen hundred males returning at this time.

There the narrative of the book of Ezra practically ends, and we are now introduced to Nehemiah—a wonderful servant of God. Learning of the distress of the remnant of the captivity, that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and its gates burned with fire, this Greatheart fasted and prayed for certain days. Cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, the king noticed his sad countenance and inquired the meaning of it. Emboldened, Nehemiah told his story, and asked the king to send him to Jerusalem. The king granted his request. Arriving at Jerusalem he found certain enemies

> "grieved . . . exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (Neh. ii. 10).

Under Nehemiah's leadership and inspiring example the building of the wall went on apace. This so roused the enemies—Sanballat, Tobiah, and others—that Nehem-

iah had to arm the people, half of them working, and half standing ready to repel any sudden attack. Finally the wall was finished.

From henceforth there is silence in Scripture as to the history of the Jews, till the veil is lifted at the birth of Christ, and then only in relation to Christ.

The historical narrative ends B.C. 445, the only recorded intervention of God subsequently being the touching prophecy of Malachi (B.C. 397). Then for nearly four centuries there is silence till the veil is lifted with the story of the marvellous intervention of God in the affairs of this world in sending His beloved Son into it, thus fulfilling many a glowing prophecy recorded on Old Testament page.

Secular history gives us much information as to the history of the Jews in that interval.

The endeavour of the Jews to regain their independence under the Maccabees, resulting in Palestine's becoming tributary to Rome, prepared the people and the land for that condition of things into which Christ was born. This period we do not enlarge upon. We will pass on to the moment when Scripture lifts the veil once more.

We come now to that most wonderful moment in the world's history, when the Lord Jesus Christ entered this world. For this moment the eager centuries had waited. To this hour the prophetic page had pointed with unerring finger.

God's ancient land was under Roman yoke, its rightful King—Joseph—was but a carpenter, the Temple at Jerusalem was the creation of Herod, the Idumean king, when this most marvellous event took place.

To an uninstructed eye, the event was of little importance. A humble peasant pair, brought from their Galilean home in Nazareth by the edict of Caesar Augustus to the city of David, Bethlehem, in order to be taxed, meant nothing in the eyes of the world. A detail of no signifi-

cance. What did the world know of or care about this humble pair? What did it matter if she gave birth to her First-born in a stable because there was no room in the inn?

But faith can see that the whole Roman Empire was taxed in order that this wondrous event should take place in Bethlehem. Did not Micah, seven centuries before this occurred, put on record the prophecy?—

> "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (chap. v. 2).

Here then we have Him, of whom Isaiah wrote in glowing utterance:—

> "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
>
> "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever" (chap. ix. 6, 7).

We have the record of His beautiful life in the four evangelists. Emphatically He went about doing good. The common people heard Him gladly. They wondered at the gracious words that fell from His lips.

And what did the Jews do with Him, their greatest Prophet, the brightest Ornament of their race—greater far than that, the Mighty God, the Father of eternity, the One who was their sole Hope, did they but know it? The crucifixion of Christ stands as the greatest crime that ever stained the history of this world. And what has been the **governmental** result of this to the Jews? Here we come to a most interesting inquiry.

We find the answer in Luke xxi. 5—26. How deeply interesting is this scripture when we reflect that it contains a prophecy that fell from the lips of the Lord Him-

self. For our purpose we would draw attention to the different parts of this prophecy.

(1) THE TEMPLE SHOULD BE RAZED TO THE GROUND.
(2) JERUSALEM SHOULD STAND A SIEGE AND FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.
(3) THAT IT SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY TERRIBLE BLOODSHED.
(4) THAT THE JEWS SHOULD BE DISPERSED AMONG THE NATIONS.
(5) THAT JERUSALEM SHOULD BE TRODDEN DOWN OF THE GENTILES "UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED" (verse 24).

Not for seventy years' exile, as happened when Judah was removed to Babylon, but for nearly two thousand years, has the Jew been in exile. If sin brought about seventy years' exile, what **terrible** sin has the nation committed to bring this about ? Surely the rejection of God's Son. Reader, see that **you** do not reject Him.

Let us now take up the points enumerated above.

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(1) THE TEMPLE WAS TO BE RAZED TO THE GROUND.

In the month of April, A.D. 70, Titus, at the head of not less than one hundred thousand trained and seasoned troops, advanced against Jerusalem.

But for internal factions he would probably never have effected an entrance. Even in his success he ardently desired to spare the Temple and preserve it intact.

But the Lord Jesus had said that not one stone should be left upon another. Whose word was to stand? That of a dead Galilean peasant, as the world would judge, or the word of the general of the mighty army of the mightiest empire the world had ever seen? Let the historian present his vivid picture of the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy.

> "The direful day arrived of the destruction of the Temple by the power of Rome. A soldier, then, upon the shoulders of a comrade, succeeded in casting

a torch through a door in the wall which led to the chambers on the north side of the Temple. Titus would have avoided this, for he was reluctant to destroy what was the glory of the whole world. The conflagration spread, however, fanned by a tempest; in the flames, besiegers and besieged, locked in the final struggle, perished—their bodies against the very altar, and the blood ran down the steps. The ground could not be seen for the dead. The furious priests brandished for weapons the leaden seats and spits of the Temple service, and rather than yield, threw themselves into the flames. Titus and his captains, entering the Holy Place, found it beautiful and rich beyond all report. **The fire fastened upon all but the imperishable rock;** the Roman standards were set by the eastern gate, and Titus received the salutes of the legions as emperor."—**The Jews—Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern** (Hosmer), page 118.

How literally was our Lord's prophecy fulfilled, that not one stone should be left upon another.

. . . . .

(2) JERUSALEM WAS TO STAND A SIEGE AND FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

The city was defended with fanatical bravery, but all was of no avail. It fell, and was razed to the ground, excepting three towers and part of the wall, that might stand as witness how great a city had been captured.

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(3) THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM WAS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH GREAT BLOODSHED.

The historian Josephus, who has preserved for us a very detailed description of the siege, says that no less a number than one million one hundred thousand inhabitants were slain and only ninety-seven thousand survived. The proportion between the slain and the captives is staggering. It was the bloodiest siege in the history of the world.

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(4) THE JEWS WERE TO BE SCATTERED AMONG THE NATIONS.

How true this is! All over the world the Jews are scattered, Russia, and especially Poland, holding large

numbers of them. Spain, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, Asia, Africa—all witness to the dispersion of the Jews, and in later years, as civilization has spread out, they are found in North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, etc.

More than that, their history has been one long course of oppression, murder, spoliation, ravage, and banishment.

One country, Great Britain, has given the Jews a refuge and protection, extending with the widening of the borders of the English-speaking world to the United States of America and the British Colonies. But alas! it was not always so. A brief account of how the Jews came to these shores, and their treatment, will furnish a sample of how they were generally treated, and in many cases are to this hour more or less. The historian tells us:

> "The treatment accorded to the Jews by Englishmen was no kinder than they experienced on the Continent, though the persecution was less colossal, from the fact that the number of victims was smaller. The Israelites probably came to Britain in the Roman day, antedating, therefore, in their occupation, the Saxon conquerors, by two or three centuries, and the Normans by perhaps a thousand years."—**The Jews —Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern** (Hosmer), page 187.

At that time Saxon might fight with Briton, and Briton with Saxon, but the hand of all was against the Jew. King Canute banished them from his kingdom, but they returned when William, Duke of Normandy, conquered England.

So things went on till the time of Richard, the Lion. The Crusades were inflaming military passion, and Richard put himself at the head of this movement. The Jews, wishing to ingratiate themselves with him, overshot the mark. With rich clothes and costly gifts they repaired to Westminster Abbey at the coronation of the king. Was not the king about to take his army to the Holy Land, and rescue, if he could, the Holy Sepulchre from the

defiling custody of the infidels ? Here were infidels at home.

The persecution broke out, and swept over London, not a Jewish household escaping robbery, murder, and outrage. The tide passed over London, and enveloped the provinces, where enormities were perpetrated exceeding those of the capital.

York Castle witnessed the worst scene of all. Five hundred Jews had taken refuge in this fortress. Seeing that resistance could not be successful, the Chief Rabbi of York counselled that, rather than yield to their enemies, who would torture and slay them to a man, they should yield up their lives to their Creator by taking each others' lives. The advice was taken.

During the night, whilst the besiegers were watching the castle, flames burst forth. Inside, the men had slain their wives and children, then fell by each others' swords, the less distinguished dying first, till at length the Chief Rabbi stood alone. Around him lay in the stillness of death maiden and greybeard, young and old. A self-inflicted stroke, and the brave old man had joined his compatriots. The fire blazed forth in a mighty conflagration. Entrance next day was easily effected by the besiegers, only to find a heap of ashes and five hundred charred skeletons.

For one hundred years after, a scattered remnant maintained a precarious footing, till Edward I. drove them forth from the land to the number of sixteen thousand five hundred. For four hundred years there is no trace on record of a Jew being left in the country, when finally Cromwell gave them permission to return. Though long under heavy disabilities their lot gradually ameliorated, till to-day they receive every protection and privilege that a Briton himself is entitled to.

Lord Beaconsfield, one of Britain's greatest statesmen, was a Jew. The late Lord Chief Justice, Lord Reading,

was a Jew, whilst the chief financiers—the Rothschilds—are Jews, and the list could be indefinitely added to.

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(5) THAT JERUSALEM SHOULD BE TRODDEN DOWN OF THE GENTILES "UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED."

How true this prophecy has proved. Jerusalem has been in the hands of the Romans, Saracens, Turks of the Seljukian race, Egyptian caliphs, Latin Christians, Egyptian caliphs for a second time, Mamelukes, and the Turks of the Ottoman race.

Now it is in the hands of the British, and though the land may be given back to the Jews they will doubtless hold it in sufferance as guaranteed by Gentile powers.

Not till Christ reigns will Jerusalem be INDEPENDENT of Gentile dominion.

. . . . .

We might finish our brief history by calling attention to the fact that the nation of Israel is still loved by God. "As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 28, 29); that is to say, God will not repent or change His mind as to Israel's call, and the gifts He has given to that favoured nation.

That being so, the future of Israel, according to Scripture, is connected with their being brought back to their own land in unbelief. Palestine becoming the strategic centre of the military activity of the revived Roman Empire, the great tribulation will break upon the Jews as the climax of God's governmental dealings with them, resulting in their repentance and willingness to accept the long-rejected Christ as their long-promised Messiah. Then Christ will come and take His rightful place as the Messiah over Israel, and be recognized as the King of kings and Lord of lords—"the Prince of the kings of the earth." The details of all this will come out later in this volume.

BRIEF NOTES.

The Old and New Covenants.—The Old Covenant is the law given by Moses. The New Covenant is yet to be made with Israel. It is promised in Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34; the time of it and the terms of it are explicitly laid down in Ezekiel xxxvi. 24—38.

The Old Covenant was one of demand, and though "ordained to life," was in result one of condemnation and death (see 2 Cor. iii.).

The New Covenant to be made with Israel, following on her deep repentance at the end of the great tribulation, and synchronizing with the personal reign of Christ in the Millennium, is one of pure sovereign grace, consisting of new birth, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. What a day will that be for Israel!

The righteous foundation for this New Covenant is already laid in the death of Christ, and though not ratified with Israel as a whole, it has been antedated in God's dealings in blessing with His saints from earliest times. Apart from new birth there can be no link with God in blessing. The forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit were alike promised in Old Testament times.

As to Christians, though not formally under it, they have the blessings of it already. The cup at the Lord's Supper signifies "the blood of the New Testament [Covenant]." The Apostle Paul and his companions were made "able ministers of the New Testament [Covenant]."

The Christian has, indeed, larger and fuller blessings than those of the New Covenant, but as the greater includes the lesser, so do Christian blessings include the New Covenant blessings.

Meanwhile these blessings are found in connection with the Church, but when the Lord comes for His people,

and Israel is set up under Christ, as Priest and King upon His throne, the New Covenant will be made with Israel in a public way.

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The River of Egypt.—The natural conclusion is that this river is the Nile, which is indeed the only river in Egypt, upon which the whole prosperity of the country depends.

But in considering these matters one has ever to view them from the standpoint of Palestine and in relation to the Jews.

"The river of Egypt" formed the southern frontier of the Holy Land. It was called by the Jews the river or brook of Egypt—Shihor or Sihor—because it formed the southern frontier, and beyond it **the** great power they had to reckon with was Egypt.

It is evident it cannot mean the Nile, which was one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles further in a west and south-westerly direction. Whoever possessed the Nile possessed Egypt, and Israel never possessed that country.

Joshua, enumerating the **uttermost** cities of the tribe of Judah, localizes them as far south as Gaza with her towns and villages, which are said to be "unto the river of Egypt," evidently indicating a river in that neighbourhood, which could only refer to the river Shihor or Sihor.

The word employed in Numbers xxiv. 5, and in other places, is **nachal,** signifying a winter torrent, or a dividing brook in a valley, which further points to the same conclusion. But the land promised to Abraham is to be "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18). Here the word employed is **nahar,** a river, and would probably allude to the most easterly branch of the Delta of the Nile. The promised land will be very much greater in extent than the actual territory occupied by the Israelites hitherto.

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Revelation xi. 18.—The import of this verse should be clearly grasped if Revelation is to be understood. It rapidly surveys the wind-up of all things. Seeing that this is the great judgment book, the winding-up of judgment comes first in the verse.

The reward of His servants the prophets, the saints, and them that fear His name, small and great, comes next, **not in order of time,** but in moral order. The destroying of them which destroy the earth is the clearing of the earth of evil, so that those who are to be rewarded may have their place in the coming kingdom, just as the flood destroyed those who destroyed the earth, and thus prepared the way for Noah's place in the new earth of that day.

To make it clear, the first half of the verse carries us on to the great white throne, which is the final act of judgment, and takes place on the threshold of the eternal state, whilst the second half is chronologically earlier, and leads up to the battle of Armageddon (Rev. xix.), the siege of Jerusalem (Zech. xiv.), the sessional judgment of the sheep and the goats (Matt. xxv.), and the setting up of the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. xx. 4).

The clear grasping of the meaning and place of this verse is a great help.

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The Chief Personages in the Last days.

1. **"A beast rise up out of the sea"** (Rev. xiii. 1) refers to the Roman Empire; the head wounded to death being healed, its revival. The Empire and its ruler are often referred to in the same terms. The beast, then, is the political and military head of the revived Roman Empire—the last and greatest of its Emperors. His doom is narrated in Dan. vii. 11 and Rev. xix. 20.

2. **The "beast coming up out of the earth"** (Rev. xiii. 11) is called "the false prophet," proving his religious character; he is called "that man of sin," "the son of per-

dition," "that Wicked" (2 Thess. ii. 3 and 8); "antichrist" (1 John ii. 18); and his doom is foretold in Rev. xix. 20. In the Old Testament he is described as "THE King" (Dan. xi. 36—40).

3. **"The King of the North"** in the Old Testament is the Assyrian. He will be revived in future days and may prove to be the Turk driven into Asia, for the Turks are an Asiatic race, and probably come from the very region of the ancient Assyrians. His doom is given in Dan. xi. 40—45.

4. **"The King of the South"** is Egypt, and his chief antagonism is with the King of the North. Dan. xi., verse 40, gives us plainly the three kings:—

> "And at the time of the end shall the King of the South push at him [the King of verses 36-39, the Antichrist]: and the King of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind."

5. **"Gog and Magog"** stand for the Russian ruler and his people.

> "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk)" (Ezek. xxxviii. 2, N.T.)

For Russia, who has been a bitter persecutor of the Jews, a great role in the future is assured.

We append a separate note on the subject: page 261.

6. **"A great red dragon"** (Rev. xii. 3). He is called in verse 9, "that old serpent," "the Devil," "Satan." Here we get THE **supernatural** agent behind the scenes, energizing the forces of evil already described.

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A Trinity of Evil.—The devil, the beast, and the false prophet (antichrist) form the great trinity of evil. Their activity is general, whilst the Kings of the North and the South are largely connected with the Jews, whose land lies between their territories.

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Gog and Magog.—It is interesting to note that Gog (the Ruler) and Magog (the Russian people) are the last people

specifically mentioned in Scripture. **After** the millennium, in the last great uprising of Satan against God, Gog and Magog, the implacable enemies of the Jew, will meet their final doom in the Holy Land (Rev. xx. 8).

Ezekiel xxxviii and xxxix. show the part Gog and Magog will play **before** the millennium, finding their then, but not final, doom in the Holy Land.

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Geography and the Four World Empires.

The Babylonian Empire began in the Valley of the Euphrates, the cradle of the human race, and extended west to Armenia and Palestine.

The Persian Empire extended further west, and reached to the whole of Asia Minor and Egypt.

The Grecian Empire extended still further west, originating in Europe in the territory (Greece) from which it made its conquests.

The Roman Empire was the greatest of all the four world-wide empires, both in extent of territory and in power. The Roman power in Italy conquered the Grecian Empire, and extended also west of Italy, to Spain, France, and Britain. Roughly speaking it was west of the Rhine and south of the Danube, and did not include Germany or Russia. It extended its hold on the north coast of Africa.

The Second, Third and Fourth Empires held Egypt, the Roman adding the whole of the North African littoral as known by us to-day under the names of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.

Note how the movement was from east to west. To-day the interest is gravitating from west to east, and Palestine is rapidly becoming the strategic centre of the world. —Surely the signs are ominous. The world is getting ready for its final battles.

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Jewish Prophecy Arrested by the Christian Era.—We have often pointed out that there can be no correct views of prophecy, as a whole, apart from understanding that Old Testament prophecy concerns itself with the Jew, and the Gentile in relation to the Jew, and of course all in relation to Christ.

In that way the long centuries of the present Christian era are taken no account of in Old Testament prophecy.

It is deeply interesting to find this long gap accounted for from a different standpoint. Mons. E. Guers, a Protestant Pastor of Geneva, writes in 1855: "We cannot repeat it too often, so long as Israel, dispersed throughout the world, ceased to have a national and independent existence, prophecy interrupts the circumstantial and regular history of Jerusalem. But so soon as the nation, still scattered to the four winds of heaven, returns to its own land, . . . Israel becomes in prophecy again the explicit subject of divine testimony."

. . . . .

Armageddon and Zechariah xiv.—It is important to see that the Old Testament does not give us the destruction of the false prophet (Rev. xix.), though the end of the beast is indicated in Dan. vii. 11; whilst the New Testament does not give us the siege of Jerusalem before the Millennium (Zech. xiv.) nor the destruction of the King of the North.

The reason is not far to seek. Revelation deals with the **destruction** of the Gentile power, of God's enemies; while Zechariah deals with the **deliverance** of the Jewish remnant, God's people.

. . . . .

The Greek Church and Babylon.—It is not a little interesting to ask why the Greek, or Eastern Church, broke loose from the Roman, or Western Church. We can trace in it God's hand preparing the way for the fulfilment of His own word.

Scripture presents the Romish Church as being allied with the Roman Empire, and standing together up to a point. This is seen in the prophecy that the woman (apostate Christendom taking its character from the Romish Church) is to sit upon the scarlet-coloured beast (Romish Empire); that is, they are intimately connected: either the Empire **carries** the apostate profession, or the apostate profession **controls** the Empire, or it may be a mixture of both.

On the other hand, Gog and Magog (Russia) have a very great role to play in the future, and that as distinct from the Roman Empire.

That being the case, it would render things vastly more complicated if both the Roman Empire and all that Russia stands for were dominated by one vast, subtle, imperious, highly organized religious system.

We know that other countries besides Russia have been affiliated to the Greek Church, but we should be prepared to see whole countries seceding from the Greek to the Romish Church, if it suited their purpose, or if forced to do so by the dominating power of the revived Roman Empire.

The great Greek Church country has been Russia, and in that way she has been set free, we believe, from Rome for a distinct purpose.

Symbolic "Babylon" in Scripture, we believe to refer definitely to the preponderating influence of the Romish church.

• • • • •

The Desert shall Blossom as the Rose.—"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa. xxxv. 1).

It has often been asked how the earth will support the huge increase of population that will take place during the

thousand-year reign of Christ, when the birth rate will be high and the death rate practically nil.

A variety of circumstances will enable us to give a satisfactory answer. First, no standing armies and huge navies will be tolerated during the reign of peace and righteousness; prisons, reformatories, lunatic asylums, poor-houses, will practically not be wanted. Doctors, lawyers, and the multitude of professions and trades that are called into prominence through man's sin will not be needed at that time.

Thus every man and woman will be free to follow the avocations of peace. Disease, mental affliction, the feebleness of old age, will not impair the productive power of the population.

Moreover, the curse on nature will be greatly minimized. The ground will be prolific. Blight, canker, pest, bad seasons, will not hinder full fertility.

Added to all this, the verse we have just quoted throws a flood of light upon the changed condition of things. Through seismic alterations the desert shall have water again, and there is no fertilizer like that precious fluid. How poetically the Scriptures present this to us: "The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (Isa. xxxv. 7).

Think what will happen when the mighty stretch of the Sahara is thus changed. Think of all the Arabian and Syrian Deserts, and all the desolate parts of the earth thus altered.

How glorious will be the time when—

"He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan."

. . . . .

The Assyrian and the Jew.—It has been helpfully remarked that when the Jew was in the land the Assyrian, or the King of the North was the great enemy, but when he was carried captive, and his country became tributary,

Babylon became the chief enemy, and the succeeding empires took up that position, till we find Rome dispersing the Jews among the nations.

But when the Jew goes back to his own land in unbelief the King of the North will again come into prominence.

It looks as if the Turk might play the role of the King of the North in the future day. Driven little by little out of Europe he will seek compensation in Asia, and there nurse schemes of revenge against Palestine and Mesopotamia, once his possessions.

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David and Solomon Typical of Christ in Relation to the Setting Up of the Millennium.—The destruction of the beast and false prophet will be **summary.** Not so the destruction of the Lord's enemies in the siege of Jerusalem subsequent to the destruction of the beast and false prophet, and prior to the setting up of the Millennium. The Jews will be allowed, in the wisdom of God, to be sorely tried, their city captured, and their people taken captive. This is necessary because of their **state.** And not all at once will they be at peace with all their enemies, though Christ Himself is their King.

This is finely put by another. "I doubt not Jesus will reign in the character of David before assuming that of Solomon. He suffered as David, driven away by the jealousy of Saul. The remnant will pass through this in principle. This is the key of the Book of Psalms. He will reign as David, Israel being blessed and accepted, but all their enemies not yet destroyed. And, finally, He will reign as Solomon, that is to say, as Prince of Peace. Many passages, such as Micah v. and several chapters in Zechariah, Jeremiah li. 20, 21, Ezekiel xxv. 14, speak of this time, in which Israel, already reconciled and acknowledged and at peace within, shall be the instrument for executing Jehovah's judgment without. (Compare Isaiah xl. 10-14). (J. N. Darby, **Synopsis of the Books of the**

Bible, vol. ii, new edition, revised, page 404.) It is important to turn up the scriptures referred to.

But, naturally, Christ assuming the David character will be for a brief period, and leading up to His assuming the Solomon character, when He shall reign in peace and righteousness, and all nations shall come up to Jerusalem to worship.

It is suggested that after reading this volume to the end, it would be profitable to re-read these notes in the light of what has been set forth.

BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE REVELATION.

THE Apostle John, the writer of the Book of the Revelation, was imprisoned in Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Asia Minor, where tradition says he worked in the copper mines. The date (A.D. 96) at the top of our Bibles shows that the Revelation is one of the very last books written to complete the canon of Scripture.

The Revelation is the great prophetical book of the New Testament, as Daniel is of the Old, in connection with the detailed course of future events.

The book is stamped with a precious character:—

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

We are told that God gave it to Him in order to show to His servants things that must shortly come to pass, and He committed it to the Apostle John. The book begins as no other book in the Bible does by saying:—

> "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand [**near**, N.T.]" (Rev. i. 3).

Doubtless the reader is "blessed" as he peruses any part of God's Word, but this definite promise is significant, and encourages us in the study of **this** book.

Next we notice that John can say of himself,

> "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet" (verse 10).

And again later on he says:—

> "And immediately I was in the Spirit" (chap. iv. 2),

thus emphasizing in a remarkable way the character of the book.

Further, it was addressed to the seven assemblies grouped together in Asia, which was a small province in the western part of what is known to-day as Asia Minor. As we shall see later on, the seven epistles of chaps. ii. and iii., whilst addressed to seven existing as-

semblies and dealing with the state which characterized each at that time, also present a prophetic history of the Church from the end of the Apostolic Age to the Rapture. It will be thus seen how directly this wonderful revelation is addressed to all Christians at all times.

THE DIVINE DIVISION OF THE BOOK IS THREEFOLD.

The Lord Jesus Himself says to John:—

> "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (chap. i. 19).

Nor are we left in any doubt as to where these three divisions begin and end. Chapter i. gives us "the things which thou hast seen"; chapters ii. and iii. " the things which are"; chapters iv. to xxii. "the things which shall be hereafter."

Chapter iv. commencing with the invitation—

> "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter,"

clearly indicates where the third division begins.

* * * * *

" THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN "
(Chap. i. 12—16).

The first thing John saw was the seven golden candlesticks, each candlestick representing one of the seven assemblies addressed. The figure of a candlestick is symbolic of the light or testimony borne by each assembly.

Next the apostle tells us he saw one "like unto the Son of Man" walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, truly the Lord Himself, for He could say to John:—

" I am the First and the Last."

His appearance was terrifying, judged by the effect upon John, who tells us that he fell at His feet as dead.

He was girt about the paps with a golden girdle, speaking of affection being restrained as to its expression. Divine affection remains unchanged towards those on

whom it is placed, but its expression may differ. The girdle usually encircles the waist, not the breast.

His head and hair white like wool, and as white as snow, symbolize His judicial character.

His eyes, as a flame of fire, speak of discernment that nothing can escape.

His voice as the sound of many waters speaks of majesty and dignity.

The seven stars in His right hand represent the angels of the seven churches (verse 20). The angel of a church does not represent a single individual in our judgment, but those in an assembly who are directly and mainly responsible to the Lord in connection with it on account of their intelligence and weight as guiding and ruling. But being in the **right** hand of the Lord betokens that **supreme** power and authority belong to Him. Once those who have the place of guiding get away from the direct control of the Lord there is trouble and sorrow.

It is significant that the addresses given are not addressed to the assembly directly, but to the "angel" of the assembly, though once the angel is addressed the message is clearly through that chosen channel for the assembly, and the appeal thus made to every individual in it.

The sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of the Lord's mouth denotes summary judgment. He has but to **speak,** and judgment is carried out. For long in grace He has been silent, but speak He will in the end, and men must hear.

His countenance shone as the sun shineth in its strength. What a symbol of glory—divine and universal glory as the Son of Man. The Lord Jesus Christ is thus depicted in a striking, arresting way.

Once men rejected Him, but the day of judgment will come when men will have to take account of Him.

. . . . .

The Book addresses itself to the assemblies first, before branching out to Israel and the world.

"Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17).

No wonder that the Apostle fell at His feet as dead ; but the Lord tells him to fear not, and presents Himself as the First and the Last, as the living One that was dead, and who is alive for evermore, and the Possessor of the keys of hades and death.

Then the Lord instructs John to write down:—

(1) **"The things which thou hast seen,"**

(2) **"The things which are,"**

(3) **"The things which shall be hereafter."**

But in bringing us to this point John has already—in response to the command in verse 11—described the things which he had seen. May we pay heed to these things, and have deepened in our souls a true sense of God's holiness, and of the jealous observation by the Lord of all that is contrary to Him in that which professes His name, and of the sure fact that judgment must fall upon all that is not according to Him.

We now come to the second section of the Book—

"THE THINGS WHICH ARE."

There are two ways of looking at this section, both of which have their place. There were seven local assemblies existing at the time, to whom the addresses were applicable. It may be that the evils were not then full-blown, but the germs of them all were apparent to Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire.

But it would scarcely be considered that this view, true and right as it is, would exhaust the meaning of God's Spirit in inditing these remarkable addresses, and embodying them in the great prophetical book of the New Testament, and one of the very last books of the canon of Scripture.

It has long been acknowledged that these seven addresses present to us a prophetic course of the Church's history from the day in which John wrote until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He shall present

that Church unto Himself, a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The addresses are seven —the number seven speaking, as it does, of Divine perfection. So the seven addresses to the seven churches bring before us the Lord's perfect and complete dealing with His Church in discernment and discipline all through her chequered history.

In this aspect there are two or three general remarks to be made. At the close of each of the seven addresses we get the exhortation:—

> "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (chaps. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29, iii. 6, 13, 22).

"An ear" means a receptive moral condition, without which Divine communications would meet with no response.

But note, it is what the Spirit saith, not to the particular church addressed, but to **all** the churches. This is particularly significant. There is not one evil or corruption in any phase, or at any time, of the Church's history that we are not capable of. Whatever the time in which our lot is cast, we do well to pay heed to what is said to every one of the churches.

It is also worthy of note and careful study to observe that the Lord presents Himself to each of the Churches in a character that is calculated to help the overcomer to overcome just those peculiar difficulties and temptations that mark each church.

Further, it is well to state at once that the first four phases of the Church are successional, that is, one gives place to the other; whereas the last four, counting the fourth of the successional churches as the first of the next series, are contemporaneous, that is, as they come into existence, one after another, they run side by side to the end.

A diagram like the letter **L** will illustrate our meaning, and fix this thought upon the mind of each reader.

PROPHETIC VIEW OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

EPHESUS.

First phase of Church history.

Began at the end of the apostolic age when the Apostle John wrote.

Succeeded by Smyrna.

SMYRNA.

A period of persecution allowed by God as a voice to the Church, which in the preceding stage had been marked by decline of "first love."

Succeeded by Pergamos.

PERGAMOS.

The period marked by the alliance of the Church with the world, beginning about the time of the Emperor Constantine.

Succeeded by Thyatira.

THYATIRA.

That phase of the Church in which corruption asserted itself, and is seen full blown in Roman Catholicism.

Represents the whole Church till Sardis appeared, when Thyatira still pursued her way, but as contemporaneous with Sardis, and later with Philadelphia, and later still with Laodicea.

SARDIS.

God in mercy gave a purer testimony to His Word. This resulted in Protestantism.

Contemporaneous with Thyatira, and later with Philadelphia, and still later with Laodicea.

PHILADELPHIA.

Represents rather a moral than an ecclesiastical movement. It represents a moral recovery from the departure that set in at Ephesus.

Contemporaneous with Thyatira and Sardis, and later with Laodicea.

LAODICEA.

A moral movement representing the full declension that set in in Ephesus, and stands in vivid contrast to Philadelphia.

Contemporaneous with Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia.

The last phase of Church history.

The seven churches appear to be divided into three and four, inasmuch as the exhortation, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," occurs in the case of the first three churches **before** the reward is held out to the overcomer, as if to indicate that the appeal is made to the **whole** Church; whereas in the last four churches the exhortation to hear is given **after** the reward is held out to the overcomer, as if to indicate that it is no longer the Church as a whole that is looked to for response, but rather the overcomer alone.

It is to be carefully observed that as soon as Sardis appears alongside of Thyatira, Church testimony as a whole is gone, never to be revived as long as the Church is upon earth. The testimony of the whole Church under the Thyatira phase was so corrupt that the Lord could not allow it to continue. And yet there was mercy in this, for collective testimony was brought to an end by the introduction of a revived and purified testimony being placed alongside it, even Sardis, answering to the great revival of the Reformation; but more of that anon.

We do not wish to assert that there is not and cannot be effective and practical testimony to Church truths, but it is only a remnant that can give such testimony. The Church, as a whole, will never again give it. Collective testimony, that is the testimony of the Church as a whole, came to an end in the corruption of Thyatira (Roman Catholicism).

Ephesus.

As we intend to keep this book within modest dimensions, the reader must expect a rapid sketch rather than a detailed examination.

Observe in this address to the church at Ephesus the solemn introduction of the Lord as the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; His commendation of

all that can be praised; the enumeration of their good deeds, not few nor costing little, yet the sad absence of any indication of the **spring** of these services.

He could speak of their works, their labour, their patience; yet how different is it from the way that the Spirit of God could say to the Thessalonian Christians:

> "Remembering without ceasing your work of **faith,** and labour **of love,** and patience **of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. i. 3).

How the Spirit of God loves to give all the credit He can, but gives no more than is strictly due. So the silence of Scripture often discloses sadness, as in this case.

But the feelings of the Spirit of God cannot be restrained. In faithfulness He lays His finger on the sore spot. In remonstrance all the more powerful because of its restraint and brevity He says:—

> "Nevertheless I have . . . against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. ii. 4).

The word "**somewhat,**" printed in italics, should not be in the text. It weakens the sorrowful charge. And then the Spirit adds: —

> "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (verse 5).

It is as if the Church had fallen from some lofty height, and lay crushed and bleeding at the bottom of some awful precipice.

Behold in this departure from first love the germ of every evil in the Church, whether seen in the unspeakable corruption of Thyatira, or the deadness and self-complacency of Laodicea. The touching reproof and appeal of the Lord speaks to our hearts that He values our love, and it is in the healthful exercise of this bond that we shall be kept. May this have a special voice to each one of us at this present time.

The threat to remove the candlestick evidently had not the effect it should have had, for, viewing things from the prophetic, and not the local standpoint, we find the Eph-

esian phase passes away to give place to the Smyrna stage —the candlestick was removed.

The overcomer in the Ephesian Church will have the reward of eating of the tree of life in the Paradise of God. The Tree of Life is Christ, and it means that if through God's grace and the supply of His Spirit the believer is able to withstand the chilling influences of the moment, and is characterized by whole-hearted love for the Lord, when heaven comes Christ Himself will be the food and delight of his soul—a full reward indeed for overcoming every difficulty down here.

Smyrna.

To this church the shortest address is given, and in it not a word of rebuke is said. We must not, however, suppose that everything was perfect. God allowed the Church in that period to go through much tribulation. It is as if the Lord, jealous of the affection of His people, permitted the persecution as a means of recovery.

The prophecy is here given that the devil should cast some into prison, and that tribulation for ten days should be their portion. There were indeed ten distinct pagan persecutions, possibly referred to in the prophecy. The following list gives the name of the Emperor under whom the persecution occurred, and the approximate year of its outburst.

	A.D.
(1) Nero - - - -	54
(2) Domitian - - -	81
(3) Trajan - - -	98
(4) Adrian - - -	117
(5) Septimus Severus -	193
(6) Maximin - - -	235
(7) Decius - - -	249
(8) Valerian - - -	254
(9) Aurelian - - -	270
(10) Diocletian - - -	284

Doubtless persecution generally marked the whole period, but there were these ten distinct outbursts.

How encouraging the reward to the overcomer that he should not be hurt of the second death. Man may kill the body, but he has no power to kill the soul.

PERGAMOS.

The down-grade of that with which the name of Christ was connected is sadly evidenced in this assembly in the statement, twice repeated, that it dwelt where Satan had his seat. In the Smyrna phase we have seen how Satan sought to overthrow Christianity by attacking it from **without;** here he seeks another method, that of undermining it from **within.** His former effort had, indeed, under God's overruling hand, only purified the Church, and now what the **persecuting** emperors, acting as Satan's agents, had failed to encompass, the **patronizing** emperor—Constantine—accomplished, viz., the ruin of the Church.

Constantine, in the fourth century, was the first emperor to be favourable to the Christians. He repealed the persecuting edicts of former emperors, placed Christians in high positions in place of pagans, and generally corrupted Christianity by his favours and patronage. True he was not actually baptized as a nominal Christian till a few days before his death, but his attitude towards Christianity throughout began that unholy alliance between Church and State. His influence made the Church a political power in the world, thus destroying its proper character and wrecking its true testimony.

Thus was begun that grafting of pagan observances on to Christianity, and the transformation of pagan feast days into Christian feast days, which developed into the depths of corruption seen in Thyatira.

Pergamos, though sound evidently as to the profession of Christian doctrines, tolerated those who held the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes.

We have Scripture to tell us what the doctrines of Balaam were. He was a false prophet who seduced the Israelites into the two sins of idolatry and fornication. Certainly his doctrines, finding root in Christian soil, are seen in full bloom in the idolatry of Roman Catholicism, the canonizing and veneration of saints and of the Virgin Mary, and in the fornication, which, if taken in a spiritual sense, consists in the friendship of the world as cultivated by the Church. Friendship with the world is spiritual adultery.

> "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James iv. 4).

The origin and doctrines of the Nicolaitanes are wrapped in obscurity, but all are agreed that their doctrines must have been impure and unholy.

Thyatira.

In Thyatira we behold the full-bloom development of the patronage the world showed towards the Church. Up to this point we find the Church sound as to fundamentals. The evil is at worst only tolerated among them. The mass is sound in faith. In Thyatira, however, we strike a more terrible note. Corruption has done its awful work **till the whole mass is leavened.**

A name of grave import is introduced, that of Jezebel, the shamelessly wicked queen of Ahab, now used, we believe to symbolize the utterly wicked influence of Rome.

No wonder that the infidel historian, Gibbon, in writing the history of those times should say, "The history of the Church is the annals of hell."

Corruption and wickedness rose to such a height that God came in, and by giving a revived testimony, as the result of the glorious Reformation, took away from Roman Catholicism its testimony as the **whole** Church. Its testimony was indeed one of wickedness and corruption, and

no wonder that God came in and broke up that testimony and divided the professing Church.

Yet even in Thyatira there are those, who have not known the depths of Satan, and upon them is put "none other burden"; that is, they are left where they are. Sincere, and ignorant of the awful system in which they find themselves, they can walk before God in integrity of soul.

Notice this is the first church of the seven in which the hope of the Lord's coming is brought in. "I will give him [the overcomer] the morning star," and this is one of the proofs that it will go on to the end.

Sardis.

Sardis is described as a church of profession, but of little reality.

> "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. iii. 1).

Yet the Spirit of God can speak of the things which remain, but describes them as about to die. He also calls upon the Church to remember how it had received and heard, and exhorts it to hold fast and repent. Evidently it speaks of great recovery in contrast with the awful corruption of Thyatira.

Is this not all seen in the glorious Reformation? What Christian can read the stirring histories of Wycliff, Huss, Luther, Melancthan, Zwingli, Farel, Knox, Calvin, without being moved to his deepest depths in thankfulness to God for such a movement of God's Spirit with which they were connected?

Alas! how has the fine gold become dimmed. As soon as the Reformation in Germany leaned on the arm of princes it ceased to spread vigorously, and much of Germany is mainly Roman Catholic to this day, whilst whole countries such as Austria, Italy, and Spain have been practically untouched by it.

Yet as these lines are penned in a so-called Protestant land, and one rejoices in an open Bible and liberty of conscience, one cannot but thank God for such a work of His Spirit, bearing wonderful fruit even to this day.

Yet the record in Rev. iii. 1-6 only gives us a picture of the **present** state of Protestantism, that is of utter deadness. Alas! how this characterizes Protestantism to-day. The Lutheran Church is a striking example of it.

Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Roman Catholicism (Thyatira) and Protestantism (Sardis), together stand for the great **ecclesiastical** systems into which Christendom is divided. Philadelphia is found rather in a **moral** movement of the Spirit of God. We may learn much by contrasting Philadelphia with Laodicea. Both, we believe, stand for **moral** movements in these last times—Philadelphia standing for the greatest **moral** recovery to what Ephesus was corporately at the beginning; Laodicea standing for the greatest **moral** departure from the same. Philadelphia is characteristically caught up at the coming of the Lord; Laodicea, spued out of His mouth.

And cannot we see these two lines clearly marked in these days? True it is that we are in Laodicean days, but it is also as true that Philadelphia as a testimony will go on to the end.

The word Philadelphia means **brotherly love.** The Lord sets before that church an open door, which no man can shut. What a comfort this is to the earnest seeking soul. It is not that any need look for great attainments in themselves, or in others, for Philadelphia is characterized by "little strength." But there is the keeping of Christ's word and not denying His name. May these features characterize each one of us. To be governed by these is to be Philadelphian in character; whilst to claim to be Philadelphian is the sure road to Laodiceanism, that

is to say, any assumption on our part is fatal to true spiritual progress.

Further, there is a great promise given to Philadelphia:

> "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10).

This verse settles once and for ever that the Church will not go through the great tribulation. Suppose someone, who believes that the Church will go through the great tribulation, argues that the universal hour of temptation is not the great tribulation; we answer, if his contention is true, it can only strengthen our position. It is clear that the "great tribulation" occurs in the second half of Daniel's seventy weeks. And further, the second half of Daniel's seventy weeks brings us to **the very end** of God's governmental ways on the earth before the personal reign of Christ in the Millennium is set up.

Now if the Church is taken away from the universal hour of temptation, if it is contended that this is **prior** to the great tribulation, then it clearly follows **the Church is taken away before that great tribulation occurs.** And if the Church is taken away before the universal hour of trial starts, it is unthinkable that God would replace her on the earth to stand the brunt of the fiercest and last bit of trial. There is not one word of Scripture to give countenance to such an idea.

The language of our verse is most explicit. It does not say,

> I will keep thee from the temptation,

but

> **"I also will keep thee from the HOUR of temptation."**

Indeed the language could not be more forcible, for it literally reads, "I will keep thee from (ἐκ (Gr.) — **out of**) the **hour** of temptation." And seeing the trial is universal, there is no haven of refuge by fleeing from one

part of the earth to another. The only possible way to be kept out of the hour of trial, is by being taken out of TIME altogether, and that means being put into eternity.

Moreover, the next verse clearly points to the way that this will take place, viz., the coming of the Lord to take His people out of this world. He says:—

> "Behold I come QUICKLY: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (verse 11).

So that the trials bursting upon this world, as narrated in Rev. iv. and on, the believer will have no part in, but the reward of keeping the word of Christ's patience will be his translation before these judgments occur. Seeing the trials are the governmental judgments of God upon this world because of their rejection of Christ, and especially of the Jew as in the great tribulation, which is distinctly called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (see Jer. xxx. 7), and seeing that the Christians have on the contrary accepted Christ, and borne rejection by the world because Christ is rejected, it is quite understandable how the Lord will not allow His Church to pass through that universal hour of trial. What a cheer to the heart of the Christian to hold on to the end. The Lord's coming is indeed nigh.

To turn to the contemplation of Laodicea for a moment, one is struck by the entire change of atmosphere.

In Philadelphia we find no assumption; the Lord credits them with the keeping of His word and not denying His name; He gives the promise of His coming; and the beautiful reciprocal attitude of the Lord and His people is to be noted.

In Laodicea we get full-blown assumption: blind people professing to see, naked people professing to be well clothed, poor people spiritually professing to be rich. The whole description is of self-satisfaction, assumption, loud profession without any reality, accompanied by nauseating lukewarmness. Here the Lord speaks as outside the whole thing, as indeed He is, but yet His gracious voice

sounds an invitation in case some **individual** may hear and respond.

Beside standing generally for a loud but empty profession of Christianity, would not such concrete cases as Higher Criticism, Modernism, Millennial Dawnism, Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, Mormonism, Christadelphianism, illustrate what Laodicea means? The spueing out doubtless will take place when the Church is caught up, for what is left behind is in reality spued out of Christ's mouth.

. . . . .

Thus in this very cursory examination of these churches we see laid out for us the whole history of the responsible Church upon the earth from the Apostle John's day to the second coming of Christ.

We are living in the days of "the things that are," and these close when the Lord comes for His own.

. . . . .

THE THIRD DIVISION OF THE BOOK.*

We now come to the third division of the book, "the things which must be hereafter," or as another translator

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* In regard to the interpretation of the rest of the book there are two great schools of opinion—the historical and the futurist —the former teaching that the seals and trumpets and vials have all been already fulfilled in history, since they were shortly to come to pass in John's day. The sixth seal is said to have been fulfilled when the Emperor Constantine renounced paganism and embraced Christianity. The fifth trumpet is said to have been fulfilled when the Turk advanced into Europe, even to the very gates of Vienna, etc., etc., etc.

We do not deny that there have been happenings in history that may stand as **illustrations or foreshadowings** of what is yet to come, but that they stand as **interpretations or fulfilments** we strongly deny.

If much of what is described in the third division of the book is past, then the second division is certainly past too, and we Christians are not in the time of "the things that are." Where

puts it, "the things which must take place after these things."

At this point John sees a door opened in heaven, and the same voice, which he had heard in chapter i., even the voice of the Lord Himself, sounds as a trumpet, conveying the invitation,

> "COME UP HITHER, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter" chap. iv. 1).

This remarkable introduction of the third section of the book should be emphasized. If John in vision is to see these happenings on the earth, **he must see them** FROM HEAVEN. He cannot view them as being in their midst.

John's position then is surely typical of the position the Church will have when the judgments actually fall, viz., in heaven. This is quite in line with the truth that the Church will not go through the tribulation. The evidence in that respect is cumulative.

The first thing that meets John's gaze is a throne, and One sitting upon it. No longer is Christ looked at as walking among the seven golden candlesticks. As long as the Church is upon earth He is doing that. But here He is on the throne in heaven—a throne of government. The aspect of the One sitting on the throne is likened to a jasper and a sardine stone—the first and last stones set in the breastplate of the High Priest (see Exod. xxviii.). The sardine stone is believed to have been of a **red** colour, whilst the jasper is thought to have displayed various brilliant hues. The whole effect would be awe-inspiring, whilst the **red** colour might symbolize the judicial character of Christ and the judgments that He will execute.

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is the promise of the Lord's coming? Gone, if such fantastic theories as the historical school indulge in are true.

The ingenuity of manipulating facts of history to fit in with this historical theory might well remind us of children playing with a big puzzle. It serves no good purpose that we can see.

The rainbow round about the throne is very significant. It sets forth God in covenant with creation. God by it pledged Himself that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. The bow was set in the cloud. The cloud might threaten deluge, but the bow was the pledge, the sign of

> "the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. ix. 16),

that the earth would never again be destroyed by water. For the rainbow to be transferred from the guilty earth to heaven, from the cloud to the throne, was ominous indeed that the time of judgment had come, that God's long-suffering with the world was over, and that judgment must at length take its course.

This, then, is the introduction to this section of the book.

Next, John sees four and twenty seats, and upon them four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and upon their heads crowns of gold. If the Church by this time is caught up to heaven, one would expect in a description of what John saw there that the Church would have her place. One can search from chapter iv. to the end of the book and not one allusion to her presence on the earth, or one line of instruction or counsel as to how she should deport herself amid the extraordinary happenings of judgment will be found. Is it reasonable to suppose that Christ would leave His Church to her sorest trial, and not give one line of counsel or comfort to guide or console at such a juncture? It is unthinkable. The very silence of Scripture on this point is a piece of the strongest circumstantial evidence that the Church cannot be on the earth at that time.

But if not on earth, then she is in heaven. And it is only to be expected that next to seeing the Lord Himself, John's eye would see that which is nearest and dearest to his heart, even His redeemed people. When it is a

question of intelligently following God's judgments on the earth, one would expect that **all** the saints in glory —Old Testament and New Testament saints alike—would be represented. This we believe is seen in the four and twenty elders.

Our reasons for believing this are that:—

1. There were four and twenty courses for the priests (see 1 Chron. xxiv. 7-19), thus setting forth the whole range of worship; the priests being typical of the believer in worship.

2. Twelve being the administrative number, twelve would stand for the Old Testament saints and twelve for the New Testament—that is, twenty-four in all.

3. They were clad in white raiment and on their heads were crowns of gold. Now white raiment is clothing common to angels and glorified saints, as Scripture testifies. With the latter it specially symbolizes the practical righteousness of the saints, all the fruit of the Holy Spirit's operation, as Rev. xix. 8 testifies. But crowns are never said to be the portion of angels, whereas they are held out as a reward to believers. One of the last things said to the Church in Philadelphia is:—

> "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (chap. iii. 11).

The combination of white raiment and **crowns** can point to none other than the saints of God.

4. Their occupation confirms what has been already said. They do two things: (a) follow intelligently and with appreciation the justice of God's governmental dealings with the world, and (b) worship. They never take active part in the carrying out of judgment, as, for instance, the angels do, who are instruments for the execution of God's commands.

5. When the Church, as such, comes into view in chap. xix. 7, 8, the voice of much people exclaiming glory to God is heard **in heaven,** and in that connection the Lamb's

wife is seen. This is the first mention of the Church as such from the beginning of chap. iv. to this point.

6. In chap. xxi. 9, etc., we are distinctly told that the holy city, that is, the Church viewed in administration in connection with the Millennium, is seen as coming **"out of heaven from God."** She must have been **in** heaven to come **out of** heaven. This is at the close of the great tribulation and prior to the setting up of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

These considerations leave us in no doubt whatever as to who are represented by the four and twenty elders, and that the Church's rapture terminates "the things that are" (chaps. ii. and iii.), and that she is with her Lord in glory while His judgments sweep this world in tribulation.

Next John intimates the character of the throne, that is, of judgment, for out of it come lightnings, and thunderings and voices, and the seven Spirits of God are seen as seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. The seven Spirits of God* portray the one Holy Spirit of God in sevenfold activity—seven speaking of divine perfection in discernment and activity, whilst the seven **burning** lamps of **fire** speak of that discernment and activity being seen **in judgment.**

We are next introduced to the sea of glass like unto crystal before the throne. We are reminded of the brazen sea that Solomon made for the priests to wash in (see 2 Chron. iv. 2—6). There water was the agent for cleansing. The sea of glass speaks of absolute cleansing having been reached. No longer have the worshippers to tread the wilderness, where defilement may be contracted. Holiness is now a **fixed** state: hence the sea of glass. Glass

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* Isaiah xi. 2 may illustrate this, (1) "The Spirit of the Lord," (2) "Spirit of wisdom and" (3) "understanding" (4) "Spirit of counsel and" (5) "might" (6) "Spirit of knowledge and of" (7) "the fear of the Lord."

is in appearance like water, but unlike it in nature, in that it is not fluid, but solid.

Then come into view the four beasts* or living creatures. We judge these to be symbolical. God will have His instruments to carry out His behests in judgment, but the **character** of His actions we believe are described in this symbolical way.

First of all they are full of eyes behind and before, speaking of the omniscient discernment of God in judgments. He makes no mistakes, whether in broad principles or minutest detail.

The living creatures were four, that number speaking of that which is universal. One was like a lion, another like a calf, a third had the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle.

Lion is the symbol of strength and power and majesty.

Calf is the symbol of endurance.

Face of man is the symbol of intelligence.

Flying eagle is the symbol of rapidity of execution.

What a combination of attributes! How it speaks of the power, wisdom, and justice of God's dealings! Whoever the executors of God's judgment may be, His power, as thus described in symbol, is behind them.

Notice the four living creatures give God glory whilst the elders fall down and worship, this latter again emphasizing the place and portion of the saints of God. It is interesting to notice that the redeemed in this chapter ascribe worthiness to the Lord in connection with **creation.** It is not here a question of **redemption,** but of His claims as Creator, which He is about to enforce, though as we proceed we shall see how His redemptive work is indic-

* Greek **zōon** — living creature. The word used for the beast rising up out of the sea, the head of the revived Roman Empire (Rev. xiii. 1); and also for the beast coming up out of the earth, the false prophet (Rev. xiii. 11) is **thērion** — wild or venomous beast. Such is the exactitude of Scripture.

ated in His title of **Lamb,** characterizing His position in the book.

Chapter V.

The book in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne is the book of judgment. Note the long-suffering of God. The book is written within and on the backside, that is, the writing fills one side of the scroll and has overflowed to the back. Yet the overflow is arrested. Seven seals bind up the book. It awaits the time when One competent to open it does so. And if God thus perfectly sealed the book, who is to open it when the time of opening comes?

None can do that but One, even our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is sufficient for this.

As John wept because none was found worthy to open the book, one of the elders informed him that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, had prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. There is no mistaking who this is. He is described as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Offspring of David, the One who as Man descended from David. But He is also described as the Root of David, the One who was before David, and from whom David sprang; in short, the One who was from all eternity.

As Man, Jesus sprang from David; as Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, David sprang from Him, owed his existence and all he was to Him.

John turned, and what did he see? The majesty of the lion? Not in that character did he see Him. He turned and beheld a Lamb as it had been slain.

Is it not a little remarkable that the title Lamb, **directly** applied to the Lord, should only be found in John's writings? Twice it is found in John's Gospel, "Behold the Lamb [**amnos,** Gr.] of God" (chap. i. 29, 36). Twenty-seven times in the Revelation the Greek word **arnion,** a **little** lamb, is used. If one had been asked at random

where the title "Lamb" would most frequently occur, one would never have selected the book of judgment; yet so it is.

It seems a solemn thing that the One, despised by the world, rejected and crucified by the Jews, should be thus presented. It is as much as to say that He is the One whom God has selected to be the Executor of His judgment, and that on the ground of His work on the cross.

This Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. The horns speak of fulness of power over the earth, the seven eyes complete discernment, and as they are said to be the seven Spirits of God sent forth into **all** the earth, the thought is added of full and universal government; that is to say, that no part of the earth is beyond the penetrating power of Him who stands beside the throne.

Next the Lamb takes* the book out of the hand of Him who sits on the throne.

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*Some may find a difficulty in our saying that the One sitting on the throne (chap. iv. 2, 3) is Christ, and that the Lamb in chapter v. 7, who is clearly Christ, should take the book out of the right hand of Him who sits on the throne. The difficulty is clearly solved by seeing that Christ is looked at as the Jehovah of the Old Testament in chap. iv., and as in a general aspect denoting judgment; whereas He is looked at in a different aspect in chapter v., that is, as actually active in the unfolding of the scroll of judgment, and that as having a right to do so on the ground of having accomplished redemption, and that redemption having been refused by those who are about to come under judgment. He is then seen as the Lamb.

We append a weighty opinion as to this: "We do not find the Father here; it is Jehovah. And indeed, should we ask in whom He is personally displayed, it would be as always in the Son: but it is in itself simply the Jehovah of the Old Testament here."—J. N. Darby, **Synopsis of the Books of the Bible.** New edition, revised. Vol. v., p. 522.

The same difficulty is present in Daniel vii. 9—14, where the Ancient of Days sits upon the throne and the Son of Man receives dominion at His hands. The solution of the difficulty lies again in viewing Christ in different aspects.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should

This is the signal for an outburst of worship on the part of the four and twenty elders. Redemption being introduced, they "sing," not merely "say" as in chap. iv. They ascribe His worthiness to redemption. That which men describe as His weakness, His death on the cross, is in truth the ground of His worthiness. It is the general praise of redemption without ascribing it to any particular class. The correct translation in verse 9 should be, "hast redeemed to God by Thy blood," not "hast redeemed **us** to God by Thy blood."

Chapter VI.

In this chapter we get six seals of judgment broken by the Lamb. They are evidently providential judgments, the like of which the world has often witnessed, but with this difference, that these are distinctly set forth as the beginning of the end; that is to say, that God uses them towards the fulfilment of His own will in preparing the earth for Christ's reign.

The First Seal is simple of explanation. A **white** horse, a rider with a bow, a crown given him, describe the seal. The rider on the horse goes forth conquering and to conquer. This evidently refers to some sudden outbreak of war, which quickly reaches its objectives with little expenditure of blood. The **white** horse bespeaks the easy bloodless conquests made; the **bow** the distant objectives that are reached; the **crown** the success attained.

The Second Seal presents to us a **red** horse and a great sword given to its rider. Red is the sanguinary colour, bespeaking immense slaughter, whilst the great sword in contrast to the bow symbolizes **near** conflict, emphasizing the thought of great bloodshed. Note, it is not only a sword, but a **great** sword.

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honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23).

We think this Scripture is conclusive.

The Third Seal gives us the **black** horse and the pair of balances in his hand. This speaks of the usual outcome of a sanguinary war, viz., **famine.** Note the necessities of the poor—wheat and barley—are at prohibitive prices, whilst the luxuries of the rich—the oil and wine—are untouched.

The Fourth Seal presents to us the **pale** horse. The name of the rider is given—death—and hades follows him. They had power to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death, and with the beasts of the earth—the four sore judgments of Ezekiel xiv. 21. How terrible is the scene! How the wild beasts speak of the utter destruction of the cultivation of the countries affected. Note, we are distinctly told here that **one-fourth** part of the earth is affected. Rev. xii. 3, 4 shows that the Roman earth is designated as the **one-third,** so that one-fourth speaks of a more restricted area. God would endeavour to reach men by His hand in government. If they will not hear, His judgment becomes both more extensive and intensive, as we shall see.

The Fifth Seal is not the signal for a fresh outburst of providential judgment, but is the occasion for the description of those who are martyred during the succession of the previous seals. Evidently with the Church in glory, and the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit withdrawn from the earth, coupled with the fearful condition of things occasioned by all the bloodshed, famine, and pestilence resulting from the previous seals, persecution marks the period.

With the Church in glory, and this present dispensation of grace closed by the Rapture, the saints in view are evidently those who come into blessing as the result of the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. They are **earthly** saints, but evidently, standing true to their testimony, are martyred.

They cry for righteous judgment on their foes, a prayer not in keeping with this dispensation, but perfectly in

accord with theirs. White robes of victory are given them, and they are bidden to rest till the roll of martyrs shall be complete.

The Sixth Seal is the logical outcome of the previous seals. War, bloodshed, famine, pestilence, fearful conditions of life, lead to great political upheaval. The great earthquake speaks of a mighty convulsion of ordered society. Anarchy will sweep all before it. The sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair symbolizes dethronement of **supreme** power. The moon becoming as blood speaks of **derived** authority sharing in the catastrophe that overtakes supreme authority.

The vigorous language of the prophet, describing the heaven departing as a scroll, and every mountain and island being moved out of their places, is descriptive of the most awful and universal shattering of society that has ever been known: only throwing into still blacker relief the terrible circumstances of the previous seals that could have led up to such a fearful climax.

The great men of the earth call on the rocks to hide them, and in their terror recognize the hand of God in these providential happenings, and wrongly imagine that the great day of the wrath of the Lamb has come.

It has been thought by some students of prophecy that the sixth seal gives us the appearing of the Lord Jesus with the saints as seen in Matt. xxiv. But a little reflection should show that this cannot be. The seventh seal, following the sixth seal with its catastrophic terrors, unlooses the seven trumpet judgments, more severe and more terrible than the seal judgments. Now if the sixth seal introduced the return of Christ in power to this world, instead of judgment succeeding judgment we should have the blessed and peaceful Millennium set up.

CHAPTER VII.

Chapter vi. closes with the truly awful sixth seal, the cumulative horrors of the former five seals bursting upon

an affrighted world, so much so that men universally think the great day of the wrath of the Lamb has come.

Chapter viii. gives us the opening of the seventh seal, not so much a judgment in itself as releasing the seven trumpets—judgments more directly from the hand of God than the providential seal judgments, more intense and terrible in their character.

If the past was terrible, what heart can contemplate the more terrible future without quailing? It is just at this point chapter vii. comes in. **It is PARENTHETIC in character.** In it the prophet sees in vision an election of (1) Jews, and of (2) Gentiles, both of whom are to be preserved through the terrible tribulation about to devastate the earth.

First of all John sees four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. This symbolizes a providential restraint of judgment for the object of sealing the servants of God in their foreheads. If Antichrist will seal his servants in their foreheads (see chap. xiii. 16), God will seal His servants and preserve them.

The **four** angels, the **four** corners of the earth, the **four** winds of heaven, speak of that which is universal.

The angels holding the four winds indicate a **new** feature. The seal judgments, whilst permitted of God, are of a providential character. The trumpet judgments about to commence are of a character indicative of direct **heavenly** intervention. Hence we find **angels** are the instruments of their execution.

Another angel, having the seal of God, is heard. He cries that the earth (the ordered state if society), the sea (the masses without principle), the trees (prominent rulers and the like) shall not be hurt till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. These are described as one hundred and forty-four thousand of the tribes of Israel, twelve thousand for each tribe. It may be men-

tioned that Joseph's name is substituted for Ephraim's, and that Levi, who was not a territorial tribe, is given, and Dan's name left out. We cannot explain the reason for this omission, unless it be that the tribe of Dan was notorious for its idolatry.

We believe the number is not an exact number but symbolic. It is a solace and stay to know that God can and will preserve His people.

Now John sees a great multitude of every nation, kindred, people, and tongue. They are clothed with white robes, and have palms in their hands, speaking of victory. We are left in no doubt as to them, for one of the elders informs John that this multitude has come out of great tribulation.

Evidently it is composed of those who are blessed under the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, after the Church is caught up, and who are preserved in the faithfulness of God.

How terrible the tribulation will be is evident when the Lord tells us in Matt. xxiv. 22 that "for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." How comforting in the contemplation of it to behold the vision of the preserved companies, witnesses of God's care for and over His own.

CHAPTER VIII.

This chapter begins with the opening of **the Seventh Seal,** and silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour. The silence betokens the special seriousness of the breaking of the seventh seal.

And indeed its seriousness is seen in this respect. It is not so much a judgment in itself, but it is the prelude to the seven trumpets—a course of severer judgments than the seals themselves were.

Note, too, whilst the fourth seal affects the "**fourth** part of the earth," these trumpet judgments have for their

scope a wider area, a **third** part, and whilst affecting a wider area are more intense in their character.

Note, likewise, the seven trumpets are divided into four and three. Whilst all are called trumpets, the three last have an added description—**woes,** taking, as they do, a far more intensive form than the first four.

That these trumpets are distinctly direct interventions from heaven, and not strictly providential as the seals were, is proved by verses 3—5. An angel, evidently the Lord Himself, as the great High Priest, takes the golden censer and much incense, and offers up the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. Doubtless these are the prayers of the earthly saints, who, rightly according to the dispensation and circumstances in which they are placed, cried to God for vengeance on their persecutors. "How long? how long? O Lord," is their cry. Now the time for answering these prayers in the wisdom of God has arrived.

The angel, the Lord Himself—who else could have acted thus?—then takes the censer, fills it with fire off the altar, and casts it to the earth, and there are voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake.

Of course all this is couched in symbolical language, which, however, furnishes us with a very vivid idea of what will take place. The time has come for direct heavenly intervention of a very serious nature to be taken in judgment upon the earth.

This is the signal for the seven angels to sound their trumpets. The **angels'** sounding brings out the heavenly character of the judgments. Unlike the governmental judgment of the seals, which are heralded by riders on horses, figures of providential and earthly happenings in judgment, here we have angelic agencies at work. Further, the **trumpet,** with its loud martial blare, speaks of that which must command attention.

The First Angel Sounds.—The symbols are terrific. The

most contrary elements—hail and fire—unite in carrying out the visitations of God.

The result is that the third part of the trees is burnt up, and all green grass is destroyed. Trees symbolize those who are in positions of prominence and authority, whilst the green grass speaks of the masses. Observe this is the direct visitation of heaven in judgment.

The Second Angel Sounds.—A great mountain burning with fire is cast into the midst of the sea; the third part of which becomes blood; the third part of the creatures in the sea, and the third part of commerce are destroyed.

"A great mountain" stands for a great organized power. It may stand for an individual or for what is collective. "Burning with fire" speaks of complete destruction. "**Cast** into the midst of the sea" shows that the sudden descent of this organized power is moved from heaven, just like God used the Chaldeans against Israel, as seen in the prophecy of Habakkuk.

The result is seen in the Roman earth (the third part), as complete destruction, not only of life but of commerce. Commerce affected can bring people to the sorest plight.

The Third Angel Sounds.—A great star, burning as a lamp, falls from heaven. It falls on the third part of rivers and springs of water. The name, "Wormwood," is given to the star in its new course, and its effect is to make the waters so bitter that many men die after using them.

The great burning star betokens some great source of light in the world, standing for morality, truth, uprightness, and honour—its fall speaking of its vast influence for good being perverted to that which is evil. The observance of common morality and uprightness will be terribly corrupted. The effect will be that the springs of living are so poisoned, that life will become unbearable for many.

A terrible picture, this, of what will obtain when all hold on the common decencies of life is given up. Again the third part—the Roman Empire—is affected.

The Fourth Angel Sounds.—The third part of the sun, moon, and stars is smitten ; darkness prevails during a third part of the day and night. This evidently signifies confusion and weakness seizing the governing classes, whether supreme as symbolized by the sun ; delegated, as by the moon ; subordinate, as by the stars. The third part again emphasizes the Roman earth as the sphere of the judgments.

And now four trumpets are sounded and three are yet to come. The description of the trumpet series of judgments is arrested at this point. Verse 13 of our chapter describes an angel flying through the midst of heaven, crying,

> " Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound,"

the thrice-repeated "woe" being taken up as an added name descriptive of the terrible nature of the three last trumpets (see chap. ix. 12).

Chapter IX.

The Fifth Angel Sounds.—The first woe begins. A star falls from heaven, symbolizing a person of great authority who utterly apostatizes from truth, and who sells himself to the devil. To him is given the key of the bottomless pit.

The bottomless pit should be translated "abyss," and is distinct from hell.

Hades is the **condition** of souls without a body.

Death is the **condition** of bodies without souls.

Gehenna is hell itself, spoken of in the Revelation as " the lake of fire."

The abyss is a place where God can confine the devil and evil spirits at His pleasure.

We learn from the description of the fifth trumpet that up to now God had kept in check to some extent the forces of evil, but that now He permits this fallen star to release them for His own wise purpose. Not that God initiates or provokes evil, but it may be His wisdom and purpose and time to allow what exists to express itself.

The immediate result of the opening of the abyss is a smoke as of a furnace arising out of the pit, which darkens the sun and the air. An evil, baneful, and we may add demoniacal influence arises, affecting supreme power (the sun) and permeating social order (the air).

Out of this smoke come locusts, symbolical of spiritual forces, evil spirits, being let loose for the work of judgment. The description of these symbolical locusts gives us an idea of the agencies they represent.

First of all in order comes the description of those who are the object of their malevolence, viz., those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. In chapter vii. we have recorded the sealing in their foreheads of 144,000 of Israel, a symbolical number, we believe. Here, those who have **not** the seal of God in their foreheads come into view, viz., the ungodly Jews, upon whom the judgment of God now falls.

Secondly, we have the extent to which the judgment can go. Like Satan, who was allowed to persecute Job short of taking his life, so these symbolical locusts, these agents from the bottomless pit, are not allowed to take the lives of their victims, but to subject them for a limited period (five months) to such extreme torture that death will be desired, but in vain. Their torment is likened to the effect of the sting of the scorpion. It is specially stated that their stings were in their tails.

Isaiah ix. 15 throws light, we believe, on this statement —"The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail." The sting in the tail, then, we believe to be the perversion of

truth on the part of these demoniacal agents, resulting in such anguish of spirit on the part of those affected, as to make life unendurable.

Next we have the description of these monsters. They were like horses prepared for battle, that is, there is concerted organized attack.

On their heads were, as it were, crowns of gold, speaking of the claim to previous excelling in their deadly work, for the crown here is the reward of the victor in the games. They were no novices in their deadly work.

Their faces were as the faces of men, speaking of intelligence. Outwardly they were formidable, but behind the scenes subjection and effeminancy marked them, for we read they had hair as the hair of women. They were ferocious, for they had teeth like lion's teeth.

Breastplates of iron symbolizes that they were invulnerable when attacked, and finally we are reminded that they had tails like scorpions and stings in their tails, speaking of the form of trial they were capable of inflicting, even the instilling of untruth, which would produce exquisite anguish of spirit, making life intolerable.

Finally, we are reminded that Apollyon is their king, and that he is the angel of the bottomless pit, thus proving a controlling intelligence and subtle organization.

One terrible woe has fallen, two more are to come.

The Sixth Angel Sounds.—The Second woe begins. A voice is heard from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God. Chapter viii. 3. 4 marks the golden altar of incense as the place associated with prayer and its answer. It would seem that the prayers for vengeance rising from God's people are about to be answered.

The result of this voice from the altar is the loosing by the angel of the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates. Here we get a picture of a great power held in check by God till the exact hour for loosing it for its deadly work has struck. So we are informed that the hour and day and month and year has arrived. To slay

the third part of men was to be the result of the angels being loosed.

This shows that whilst the first woe visited the ungodly part of the Jewish nation—those men which had not the seal of God in their foreheads—this was to afflict the Roman earth.

The great river Euphrates, the spot where the angels were loosed, is the great barrier between east and west, the great barrier between what we call the Near East and the Far East. It signifies the letting loose of vast hordes of armed men in order to chasten the Roman earth.

The multitude of the horsemen is given at the prodigious number of 200,000,000, evidently not a literal number, but one setting forth the prodigious size of the armies employed.

Then again, the description of the horsemen and the horses must be symbolic. The horsemen had breastplates of fire, and of jacinth and brimstone, speaking of satanic energy and power and direction. The horses are one with their riders, for out of their mouths went fire and smoke and brimstone, and by these spiritual poison gases men were killed. Not only so, but the horses' tails were like unto serpents with heads, capable of inflicting hurt.

It looks as if something other than physical death (though leading up to that) was in view, even the effect of spiritual poison, leaving those who got under its influence in a state of utter departure from God, and pressed by the horsemen even to the length of physical death. It looks as if the decimation of the population of the Roman Empire under this truly terrible woe will be tremendous.

But the survivors are unaffected by all this, and go on with demon worship and idolatries and wickedness. Such is man!

Chapter X.

Chapter ix. 21 closes the description of the sixth trumpet or second woe. The seventh trumpet or third woe is

yet to come, and is of a very remarkable character. Chapter x. 7 tells us that

> "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God [that is, God's dealings preparatory to the open reign of Christ, when mystery will cease and full revelation as to the earth will take place] should be finished."

From chap. x. to xi. 14 is parenthetic. It begins with a Mighty Angel, clothed with a cloud, a rainbow upon His head, His face as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire. In this description there can be no mistake. Here we have the Lord Himself in angelic form. When He appears it is indeed the beginning of the end.

He has in His right hand a little book **open.** We shall presently see what this means. He sets His right foot upon the sea and His left upon the earth; that is to say, the time of His public intervention in the affairs of this world has come. He is able to assert Himself over the masses (the sea) and also over the governing part of the world (the earth).

The angel cries like a lion, and seven thunders utter their response. The prophet is forbidden to record these thunders. The whole scene is full of mystery.

The angel lifted up His hand to heaven and sware by Him who liveth for ever, who created all things—that is God—that there should be time no longer; that is, that there should be no more delay.

During this present dispensation of grace God has not intervened **directly** in the affairs of the world. In long-suffering grace He has been bearing with this world. But once the Church is caught up the work of judgment begins. First the seven seals, God's **providential** judgments, run their course; then the seven trumpets follow, direct visitations from heaven as seen in their **angelic** agency; the last three of the latter series being likewise called woes. But in the seventh trumpet or third woe,

taking place during the great tribulation, we have THE LORD INTERVENING IN PERSON.

And we are distinctly and solemnly told by the Lord Himself that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished, and that there should be time no longer, that is, no more delay. It means that God's **secret** dealings are to come to an end, and His **public** dealings are about to bring judgment to a close, preparatory to setting up Christ's Millennial kingdom. He refers to time **in relation to judgment.**

The prophet is bidden to eat the little open book. In his mouth it is sweet; in his belly it is bitter. It is the the book of prophecy, open because it is about to come to pass. To the spiritual mind all God's ways are sweet ; but the prophesying of God's ways before kings, rulers, and people, whilst affording sweetness as God's service, in its actual carrying out is bitter.

Chapter XI.

It is most important to grasp the meaning of this chapter. John in given a reed, and the angel (Christ) bids him measure the temple of God, and the altar and the worshippers ; but the court, which is without the temple, is not to be measured. The Gentiles are to be in possession of it, and the holy city is to be trodden under foot by them for forty and two months, or three and a half years.

Here we get plainly indicated the great tribulation which is to take place in the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week, and the expiry of which practically ends the time of judgment. It is the final purging of the Jews, causing at length deep repentance and readiness to receive their long-expected Messiah. To find that He is the One whom they have crucified will bring them into depths of repentance, so vividly described in Zech. xii.

The measuring of the temple, altar, and worshippers

shows that God is taking account of His ancient people as prophesied so fully in Old Testament Scriptures.

Two witnesses stand up at this awful time in testimony. Probably the two witnesses are not two men, but represent a godly remnant among the people who will render **competent** witness (**two** speaking of competent witness. "In the mouth of **two** or three witnesses every word shall be established").

God will preserve these witnesses spite of the fury of the enemy during 1260 days, that is during three and a half years. The witnesses have power. Clothed in sackcloth shows that they are broken-hearted as to the state of things around them.

They are likened to two olive trees and two candlesticks, reminding us of Zech. iv., where the prophet sees a vision of a seven-branched golden candlestick fed by two olive trees. The two candlesticks speak of their clear and competent testimony, the two olive trees that this testimony is adequately supported by the Spirit of God.

If any man will hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and destroys their enemies. They have power to shut heaven, so that it does not rain, reminding us of Elijah ; and power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with plagues, as often as they will, reminding us of Moses, who performed such miracles. Elijah witnessed to a people in relation to God ; Moses to a hostile power. Thus God would indicate how He will leave the people among whom the witness is rendered without excuse.

Yet when their testimony is finished, like their Lord and Master against whom no weapons forged could be effective till **His** hour had come, their hour comes when the beast, who ascends out of the abyss, makes war against them, overcomes and kills them. Their dead bodies lie in the street of Jerusalem, called Sodom and Egypt spiritually—Sodom, because of its wickedness,

Egypt, because of its oppression of God's people. Could there be a more solemn description of Jerusalem ?

Apparently the news of the death of these witnesses gives rise to rejoicing world-wide, so much so that earth dwellers send gifts of congratulation one to another. But their joy is short lived, for at the end of three and a half days the unburied bodies live—the spirit of life from God enters them, and they stand on their feet, and great fear seizes upon those who see them.

But their work is done, their testimony in life and death and in resurrection is over—a great voice from heaven is heard, saying, " Come up hither." In a cloud they ascend up to heaven, their enemies beholding the wonderful sight.

At the same hour a great earthquake takes place, a tenth part of the city falls, seven thousand are slain—the rest are affrighted and give glory to the God of heaven.

But the end is not yet. At this stage it is solemnly stated,

> " The second woe is past ; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

The Seventh Angel Sounds.—The third woe begins. Great voices in heaven are heard, saying,

> " The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of His Christ is come, and He shall reign to the ages of ages" (N.T.).

In our Authorized Version the rendering is distinctly faulty. It is not the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of the Lord, but the world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ is come.

Many have been the attempts at a world-kingdom. Christ alone is worthy and competent for such a glorious position, and the day is not far distant when He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

This announcement produces two results. The four

and twenty elders rise from their seats, fall on their faces and worship God, saying,

> "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned."

Solemn and glorious sight!

But the nations are angry. AT THIS POINT WE WOULD ASK THE READER VERY SPECIALLY TO NOTE CHAPTER XI. 18. In that verse we have reviewed in rapid sequence all God's dealings with men in judgment up to the very end. The time of the dead that they should be judged leads us up to the great white throne which is set up in eternity.

Next, rewards to the prophets and saints and them that feared God's name are mentioned. This gives us the result of the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. v.), and the judgment of the living nations (Matt. xxv.). This in time takes place prior to setting up the kingdom of heaven, in manifestation, what we call the Millennium.

Thirdly, the destruction of those who destroy the earth, that is, the judgment of the living takes place at the great battle of Armageddon. The first in chronological order is last in order of narration in this interesting passage.

The rest of the book is taken up with details leading up to these great events. Unless it is understood that the chronological sequence of events closes with the rapid summing up of chapter xi. 18, all must be confusion.

Nothing that is described in the later part of the book is subsequent to this verse, except chapter xxi. 1—8, which deals with the eternal state, but nothing can be subsequent **in time,** for this verse leads us up to the very portals of eternity—the great white throne.

Verse 19,* we believe, gives us the seventh woe being

*Others, whose judgment we profoundly respect, see in this verse the beginning of a new section, including the whole of the next chapter, and connect it with the Jew.

poured out. In one short verse its tremendous happenings are compressed. The temple of God is opened, and the ark of the testament seen. In other words, it is Christ's personal intervention in judgment. He is the true Ark of the Testament.

On the one hand, the time has come for the deliverance of Messiah's earthly and sorely afflicted people ; on the other, the hour has struck when their enemies and God's shall be finally disposed of prior to setting up the Millennium.

Lightnings and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake and great hail occur. The last woe descends on the quivering earth, and out of its travail is produced the blessed peace and rest that comes when Christ sets up His kingdom, and reigns in righteousness—the true Melchisedec, who, as King of righteousness and King of peace, will give bread and wine to His people—sustenance and joy.

CHAPTER XII.

This chapter is parenthetic, giving us in symbolical language a rapid history of the Jews from the birth of Christ to the great tribulation. It ignores, except by implication, the Christian era.

It is a question of the Jew in relation to Christ.

First a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars, is seen. In symbolic language Israel is here presented.

But she is looked at, not as in her **actual** condition, for at the time of the birth of Christ she was tributary to Rome, a poor broken conquered country. But here she is seen **as God intends her to be,** and as she will be in a future day.

The sun speaks of supreme authority—Israel will be head of the nations, and not the tail ; the moon under her feet tells of complete delegated authority, for all

authority in this world is delegated ; finally she wears a crown of seven stars, speaking of full administrative power, the twelve possibly referring to the twelve apostles, who in the future day will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Though this is so, the Spirit of God views Israel here in connection with

THE GREAT EVENT IN HER HISTORY,

and apart from which she would have had no divinely recorded history, viz., the birth of Christ.

Next, we read, the woman with child cries, travailing in birth and pained to be delivered. Here we have presented in symbolic language the birth of Christ. It was the fulfilment of that grand prophecy, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isa. ix. 6). And when Jesus was born we read that all Jerusalem was troubled.

Next a sinister figure comes before our notice. A great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads is presented. His tail draws the third part of the stars of heaven and casts them to the earth. The dragon stands before the woman in order to devour her son as soon as he should be born.

We are left in no doubt as to who the dragon is, for verse 9 speaks of him as " the great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." The fact that his colour is " red," shows how Satan is ready to shed the blood of God's saints.

His having seven heads and ten horns identifies his power in this connection with the Roman Empire, for in the next chapter we read of the beast rising out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns. We shall see, when we examine that chapter, how this represents the Roman Empire.

And further, the dragon drawing the third part (the third part representing the Roman Empire) of the stars of heaven, and casting them to the earth, shows that

Satan's chief power in the attempted frustration of God's purposes lies in his corrupting and controlling the Roman power.

It will be at once remembered that Palestine was tributary to the Roman power when Christ was born. The terrible evil condition of that pagan power, Rome, only brings out clearly the extent of Satan's influence.

Then the vain attempts of Herod to encompass Christ's death, as witness his slaying all the children in Bethlehem and its coasts from two years old and under, as well as Satan's opposition to Christ throughout His earthly life, are described in symbolic language in this Scripture.

Another point is worthy of notice. The crown (**stephanos**, Gr.) on the head of the woman is the word used for the crown gained as a prize in competition, as in the Olympic games. But the crowns (**diadema**, Gr.) on the heads of the dragon are those of a monarch. As a matter of fact Satan in this respect is a usurper, and his power but short-lived. Further, the crowns are on the **heads** of the dragon, whilst in the case of the beast (chapter xiii. 1) they are on his **horns.** The exactitude of Scripture is striking.

The crowns being on the head, and not on the horns, of the dragon, shows that he has real power, but it is not **outwardly** displayed. When he brings the beast upon the scene he will confer **displayed** power upon him, the crowns will be upon his horns.

The Man Child is born who is to rule the nations, reminding us again of Isaiah's glowing prophecy, "The government shall be upon His shoulder" (how one Scripture throws light upon, and answers to, other Scriptures).

No account is given here of the life of Jesus, or even of His death, for the reason that this view of Israel is given in reference to Satan's opposition to God's people because of Christ, and does not go so far as Christ being received as Messiah, but ends with Satan's attempt in

the great tribulation to wreak his vengeance. It gives us Satan's deadly enmity against Christ in reference to Israel.

So we read simply, "Her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne," referring to the ascension of Christ to God's right hand. The Chrstian era is purposely taken no account of, but the narrative goes on to describe the woman fleeing into the wilderness, and being nourished for 1260 days, that is, for for three and a half years. Matt. xxiv., which describes the outburst of the great tribulation, gives instructions for the godly remnant to flee into the mountains. Fleeing into the wilderness does not necessarily mean a literal wilderness, but the passage evidently symbolizes God's protecting care in a place of no human resources.

We read of conflict in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon ; and the dragon and his angels fighting against the angelic hosts. The dragon is defeated and cast out of heaven.

We believe this refers in an indirect way to the rapture of the saints.

Our reason for so saying is this. The Church is looked at in Ephesians as in the heavenlies. As long as the Church is the object of Christ's interest in this world, so long is it the special object of Satan's malevolence.

The Jew in this dispensation is set aside religiously until "the fulness of the Gentiles" is complete, or, in other words, until the Church history on the earth is complete. Once the Church is caught up, she is no longer **morally** in the heavenlies, but **actually** in heaven.

There the Church, like her Lord, is beyond the reach of Satan's power and hate. But once the Church is caught up, God's interest in the earth begins actively again with the Jew. Hence Satan's malevolence against God's ancient people.

With the casting out of Satan and his angels to the earth a great voice in heaven is heard saying,

> "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (verse 10).

Then we gather there is joy as the martyred of all ages and all in heaven rejoice, whilst the inhabitants of the earth (symbolizing the ordered state of society) and of the sea (symbolizing the uncontrolled masses) are warned that woe lies before them alike, because the devil knows that his time is short, that his days are numbered, and his wrath is correspondingly great.

The dragon persecutes the woman which brought forth the man child. Jesus, "God over all blessed for ever," Jesus, the Root and Offspring of David, David's Lord and David's Son, the Alpha and Omega, will be the Conqueror over Satan. He knows it. In his dark malevolence he pursues with relentless fury all that is Christ's. Because Israel gave birth to Christ, according to the flesh, Israel, now the object of God's interests and dealings, must be persecuted.

But two wings of a great eagle are given to the woman that she may fly into the wilderness, and there be nourished for a time, times, and half a time, that is for three and a half years. In symbolic language we learn that divine help is given to Israel at this time to help her to avoid to a certain extent Satan's persecution.

But the serpent casts water out of his mouth as a flood in order to sweep away the woman. On his side he makes tremendous efforts to accomplish his fell purpose. But the earth helps the woman, and opens her mouth, and swallows up the flood of water. That is to say, ordered government steps in, and defeats in measure this wild unreasoning rage.

Then the last verse gives us in one graphic sentence, simple in language, terrible in meaning, the story of the great tribulation.

> "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

There the chapter, and this special view of Israel, end.

Chapter XIII.

This chapter, like the preceding one, is parenthetic, and brings before us the revived Roman Empire, as identified with the beast that rises out of the sea ; and the second beast, the false prophet, the Antichrist, rising out of the earth.

The chapter begins with the seer standing on the sand of the sea, and seeing a beast rise up out of the sea. In this we have a picture of the fourth world-dominion, the Roman Empire—the sand of the sea referring to the multitudes of mankind ; the sea, to the unstable and revolutionary forces at work. Doubtless John has chiefly in mind what is still future, the revival of the Roman Empire, but gives us first the original appearance and character of the Roman Empire and its break up.

This beast has seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. Note, he has the same number of heads and horns as the great red dragon has, thus showing that Satan gives him his power and seat and authority.

In other words, viewing chapters xii. and xiii., Satan's opposition to God in the last days will all be concentrated against Palestine, and his great instrument will be the revived Roman Empire.

This beast takes on and absorbs all the characteristics of the former beasts, symbolizing the former world-empires, as seen by Daniel in the vision of the four beasts arising out of the sea (Dan. vii. 1—14).

Its general appearance is that of the leopard (Grecian Empire); his feet like those of a bear (the Medo-Persian

Empire); his mouth as that of a lion (Babylonian Empire). The leopard speaks of rapidity of conquest ; the bear's feet, of tenacity in holding territorial gains ; the lion's mouth, the strength and ferocity in making them ; whilst the combination gives a symbolism of the horrible power of this fourth world-empire.

One of its heads is wounded to death, and the deadly wound is healed, and all the world wonders after the beast. It is in the healing of the deadly wound that the empire is revived.

Rome arose out of chaos and revolution and became the wonder of the world. The legions of the Roman Empire were for long the subjugators and holders of vast tracts of territory. But pride, luxury, licentiousness, and debauchery ruined and enervated this wonderful power. About A.D. 476 the Huns and Goths, terrible and unalloyed savages, burst the bounds of their own lands, crossed the Alps, descended into the plains of Lombardy, reached Rome, and captured it. From that hour the Roman Empire ceased to exist. The head—imperial power—thus received its deadly wound. Doubtless God has delayed its revival, for revived it shall surely be, so that the Christian era may run its course. God once used the Roman power to chastise and disperse among the nations His ancient people the Jews, because of their rejection of Christ. But the day is coming when God will bless the Jew again. To prepare His people for this He will again use the Roman Empire to chastise His people, and through bitter persecution and deep repentance they will accept their Messiah.

When the Roman Empire suddenly becomes a reality again the world will indeed wonder. It will be of such a dramatic and wonderful character that it will suit the mood of the world, and it will be acclaimed with fervour and delirious joy.

Slowly signs of it increase on every hand. First of all, Belgium, originally in the Roman Empire, severed itself

in 1830 from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, of which it formed a part. Italy, broken up into little states and republics, among which were the Papal States, within the last sixty years has been consolidated into a united kingdom, and ever since has been gaining in power and recognition.

Then the northen coasts of Africa, under the ancient names of Mauritania, Numidia, Africa, Libya, and Egypt, were all parts of the old Roman earth, and lapsed to African rule with the break-up of the Empire. These, within the memory of the writer, have quietly, and without much notice of even Christian writers, again come under European influence. France has a protectorate over Morocco, Tunis, and Algiers ; more recently Italy has acquired Tripoli ; whilst Great Britain has an interest in Egypt.

One of the results of the Great War is that the Near East has become the strategic centre of the immediate future, and the European countries are grouping themselves in a way that may forecast the revival of the Roman Empire. The League of Nations also seems to point in this direction. We gather from Scripture that the Roman Emipre will revive in a miraculous way, so that the whole world will wonder. Certainly the policy of fear is affecting present combinations, the nations scheming against the appeal to brute force. Whether it will be fear that will actually bring about the revival of the Roman Empire, or at first platonic and democratic theories as to universal peace and disarmament, we cannot say, but that it will take place the prophetic word leads us to expect.

In a very interesting way Revelation answers to Daniel. Daniel tells us the fourth beast—the Roman Empire—will consist of ten kings, but that " another shall arise after them ; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings " (chap. vii. 24).

Without going into details, Rev. xiii. 1 simply states that the beast has seven heads and ten crowned horns. Seven subtracted from ten leaves three, and that is explained by the king who arises and subdues **three** kings, and takes a place of supreme authority in connection with the empire.

It is our strong and growing belief that the first Napoleon was permitted to come upon the scene as a type of this great overlord of the revived Roman Empire. Out of the chaos and bloodshed of the French Revolution this little Corsican lieutenant suddenly emerged. Seizing his opportunities with consummate skill, both of generalship and statesmanship, he became for a brief moment the overlord of Europe.

So out of a greater and more widespread chaos, a greater than Napoleon, we believe, will arise, and on a greater scale will come forth as the fulfilment of these striking prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

Since the first edition of this book was issued a very remarkable man—Benito Mussolini—has come to the front. By force of a wonderful personality and tremendous will he has rescued Italy from Communism, established himself Dictator, completely overshadowing the throne, and has made Italy a powerful nation of the first rank. We are often asked if he is the " beast . . . out of the sea " (Rev. xiii). We do not think this is possible as it must be some years before the great tribulation can be, which the head of the Roman Empire will bring about by breaking his treaty with the Jew. But we sometimes wonder if Mussolini is not **the forerunner** of the " beast . . . out of the sea."

Revelation xvii. 10 says, " There are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is [that is the Roman Emperor when John wrote] and the other is not yet come ; and when he cometh he must continue a short space [we believe that this might possibly refer to Mussolini]. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the

seven, and goeth into perdition." We believe Mussolini is preparing for a greater man than himself, who will be the "beast . . . out of the sea," the last Roman Emperor. Certainly his exploits are amazing and he himself believes that he is a man of destiny.

Next we read that the dragon is worshipped as giving power to the beast, and the beast himself is worshipped. Universal Satanic worship will show to what lengths evil can go. That the great Roman Emperor will be worshipped will be no new thing.

It is very instructive in this connection to note that the later Roman Emperors laid claim to divine honours, and were worshipped, and what has been may be again.

Power is given to the beast for forty and two months, that is, for three and a half years, that, is, during the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week. In this period God will specially permit opposition to Him and His people to have its full fling, during which time the beast will make war with the saints and overcome them, that is, martyr them. They will overcome him spiritually by sealing their testimony with their blood ; he will overcome them physically in their slaughter.

Evidently, whilst Daniel speaks of this great prince in connection with the whole of Daniel's seventieth week (chap. ix. 27), and shows how his treaty with the Jews for that period in the middle of the week is treated as "a scrap of paper" and shamelessly violated, launching in this way upon them the great tribulation, the Revelation fixes its attention upon the second half of the week.

Nothing but reality will withstand this great prince's assumptions ; only those whose names are written in the book of life of the slain Lamb, names written from the foundation of the world, will stand the test of this awful period.

But we are told that his end will be but the reaping of his own sowing. Leading multitudes into captivity he

will himself go into captivity ; killing multitudes with the sword he must himself be killed by the sword. Doubtless, as the empire and its overlord are treated as one, this will apply generally to the whole empire, as lending itself to the leadership of this ruler.

Now the scene changes, though similar ground is covered more or less. Another moving picture comes before us. Another beast is seen coming up out of the earth. The first beast comes up out of the sea. But this beast somes out of the earth or the land, we believe, indicating Palestine—the land of Israel.

This second beast has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. In other words, he deceives by his gentle appearance, but in reality he is energized by Satan for his own vile ends. Henceforth in the book he is referred to as "the false prophet," showing his **religious** character. In 2 Thessalonians ii. he is called " that man of sin, the son of perdition " (verse 3), sharing this latter title with Judas; whilst John in his First Epistle describes him as "the Antichrist" (chap. ii. 18).

In Daniel he is called " the King " (chapter xi. 36). He will do according to his will, hence he is often called the wilful king ; and we further learn that this false prophet must be a Jew, and that he will reign as a king and priest at Jerusalem.

He will give his power to the first beast as supported by him. Evidently his power in Palestine will be as great as that of the first beast in the Roman Empire. He will be the first beast's trusted lieutenant, and use his great power in getting the first beast worshipped.

Not only so, but according to 2 Thess. ii. 4 he will sit in the temple of God, showing himself to be God. Probably the image of the first beast set up in the temple will be " the abomination that maketh desolate," spoken of by Daniel (chap. xii. 11), and referred to by our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 15, and which will occur in the beginning of the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, ushering

in the great tribulation, " the time of Jacob's trouble " (Jer. xxx. 7).

Satan will help the false prophet to do great wonders, as if heaven were on his side. By some supernatural Satanic power fire will come down from heaven. This will have such a deceiving effect that the false prophet will persuade men that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword and did live. He will have power to give breath to the image and make it speak, and so great will be his power that those who refuse to worship the image he will put to death. He will bind the chains of his religious tyranny upon millions by instituting a great combine from which the great and the rich will not be exempt, nor will the poor be left out. The necessities of life, the carrying on of commerce, the buying and selling, will all be tightly held by this great combine, so that none will be able to buy or sell unless they have the mark of the beast in their right hand, that is more or less secretly, or in their forehead, that is openly. This will be the most awful religiously apostate tyranny the world will ever see. Principles at work to-day, developments arising rapidly before our eyes, prepare our minds to see how all this can take place.

The mysterious number of the first beast—666—has led to much speculation and controversy. It is said by Scripture to be the number of a man. Doubtless when the meaning of that number is revealed to the saints in the great tribulation it will help them to resist all Satanic allurements of that time, for 2 Thess. ii. 9 reminds us that Antichrist will come with "all power and signs and **lying** wonders," and Matt. xxiv. 24 tells us such signs and wonders will be done that were it possible they should deceive the very elect.

We would permit ourselves to say that the number six stands as the symbol of the greatest possible **human** attainment, coming short of the number seven, which stands

for **divine** perfection. It is completest attainment after man's mind under the dominating influence of Satan, and therefore diametrically opposed to God's. So 600 + 60 + 6 = 666, seems to point to the most extraordinary combination of what would attract poor fallen nature as duped in fullest way by the devil. But, such as it it, it falls entirely short of what is divine perfection according to God. On the contrary, it is the fullest and most absolute contradiction possible to all that God is in Christ.

Chapter XIV.

In this chapter we get a series of visions given to us, not in a chronological order, but as separate vignettes, or like pieces of a block puzzle which have to be fitted together.

In the first five verses we get a picture of the redeemed and martyred Jewish remnant. The fact that they stand on Mount Zion, that they sing a song peculiar to themselves and that none other could learn it, and that they constitute the firstfruits from the earth, enables us to identify them as Jewish. They had not defiled themselves with women; that is to say, they had kept themselves from the evil of the world. Their song is heard by the four living creatures and the elders; in other words heaven listens with sympathy and interest. Their song is of earthly redemption and deliverance.

Their martyrdom belongs to the third section of the book; that is to say, that which is still future, and only to begin after the Church has been raptured.

Another vision is given us in verses 6 and 7. An angel flies in the midst of heaven carrying the everlasting Gospel to preach to the earth-dwellers and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. Nor are we left in doubt as to what that message is:—

> "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that

made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

This was ever silently proclaimed by creation, as seen in Rom. i. 20 and Ps. xix. 1-6.

To fear God, to give glory to Him, to worship Him as Creator, is the path of blessing when God presents Himself in that light.

In the Old Testament times, before Christ was revealed and His death had taken place, the earliest testimony must have been of this nature.

In this present dispensation it is the Gospel of the grace of God. With the rapture of the Church this ceases, and the gospel of the Kingdom will go out.

Here we have in these last days of tribulation the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, this time by angelic ministry, bringing before the dwellers on the earth the claims of God as Creator and Judge, which if bowed to will lead to right relation to Him.

Needless to say, God blesses **all** who are blessed solely on the ground of the atoning death of Christ. Such a ground was unknown to the men of faith in the Old Testament, save as it was dimly foreshadowed in type or set forth in prophecy as revealed by God to them; but all blessed under that dispensation, as under any other, are met by God alone on the ground of that one wondrous Sacrifice.

It appears as if the preaching of the everlasting Gospel is to be the last testimony of God in grace to man. So verse 8 succinctly informs us of the fall of Babylon. "That great city" in Revelation is identified with the Romish apostate system. Babylon, as chap. xvii. shows us in detail (we shall say more concerning it later on) a vast corrupt ecclesiastical system, notorious for her persecution of the saints of God on the one hand, and her bid for temporal power on the other, and this is none other than ecclesiastical Rome. "The city of the seven hills" is

descriptive generally of Rome (see chap. xvii. 9), for the actual city is well known as being built on seven hills

"Hills" speak of pretension in this connection, and "seven" shows forth the complete arrogance of that pretension. There is only one system in the world than answers to the description, and that is Roman Catholicism. With the fall of Babylon the last profession of anything religious is gone, though that profession were a completely empty shell with no inward reality in it whatever.

The third angel follows with the clear testimony as to the doom of the worshippers and adherents of the beast. Following this is the encouragement to those who may have to seal their testimony with their blood in these truly awful times, that they are blessed or happy who henceforth die in the Lord.

Next we have the harvest and the vintage. The **harvest** speaks of that which is gathered at the end of the age. We know from Matt. xiii. that in symbolical language the harvest will consist of wheat and tares—the former to be garnered, the latter to be burned ; that it speaks of a time when the angels shall sever the wicked from among the just.

This reaping is seen in its execution at the judgment of the sheep and the goats as recorded in Matt. xxv. 31—46. The harvest results in the good. The evil is disposed of.

This reaping is done by the Son of Man Himself, using angels as His agents:

> " He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other " (Matt. xxiv. 31).

In the reaping the angel, who calls on the Son of Man to reap with His sharp sickle, comes out from the **temple.** God's way is in the sanctuary (Psa. lxxvii. 13). It is the place of discriminating judgment.

The **harvest** is gathered for blessing ; the **vintage** is trodden out for judgment. So we find in the **vintage** the angel comes out from the altar, and we are told he has power over fire. This speaks of desolating overwhelming judgments upon God's open enemies. These will be seen in the destruction of the beast and the false prophet, and their enormous armies, of God and Magog, and the King of the North, as well as in the destruction of many Jews during the great tribulation, especially in its closing moments, as we shall see in detail later. The winepress was trodden outside the city (Jerusalem), and blood comes out of the winepress even unto the horses' bridles by the space of 1600 furlongs, roughly speaking the length of the Holy Land. Armageddon will come under the vintage judgment.

Chapter XV.

Up to chapter xi. 19 we get, with the exception of a parenthesis or two, an orderly chronological order of events. Then this order is arrested, and we have a series of what we might call sectional views, all related to each other as parts of a whole, but looked at separately, and without reference to their connection with each other in order of chronology.

Chapter xii. gives us the sectional view of Israel from the birth of Christ till the great tribulation. Satan's power is manifest here.

Chapter xiii. gives us the sectional view of the rise of the Roman Empire, leading up to the great tribulation as viewed from the Gentile side, under the leadership of the two beasts—the head of the revived Roman Empire and the Antichrist. Satan's instruments are thus prominent here.

Chapter xiv. gives us a series of sectional views, which we have already briefly explained. They are seen in: (1) verses 1—5; (2) verses 6 and 7 ; (3) verse 8 ; (4)

verses 9—12 ; (5) verse 13 ; (6) verses 14 and 16 ; (7) verses 17—20.

In chapter xv. we get the resumption of what is more or less chronological. The seven angels with the seven golden vials are introduced to us. The vials are distinctly said to contain the seven last plagues.

In order to make plain our thoughts respecting the series of vial judgments, which we trust will commend themselves to the spiritual judgment of our readers, we have placed the trumpet judgments and vial judgments alongside one another for the purpose of easy comparison, for it is in the intelligent comparison of them that we shall be helped in the understanding of this Book.

Trumpet Judgments.	Vial Judgments.
The Roman Empire affected.	**The Roman Empire affected.**
(1) Hail and fire mingled with blood destroy the third part of trees and all green grass.	(1) A noisome and grievous sore upon men who had the mark of the beast and worshipped his image
. . . . .	
The Sea affected.	**The Sea affected.**
(2) A great mountain burning with fire, cast into the sea, and the third part of sea becomes blood.	(2) Vial poured upon the sea, and it becomes as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul dies in the sea.
. . . . .	
Rivers, etc., affected.	**Rivers, etc., affected.**
(3) Great star, burning as it were a lamp, falls from heaven, and falls upon third part of rivers and fountains of waters. Star is named Wormwood. It embitters the third part of waters, and many die because of their bitterness.	(3) Vial poured upon rivers and fountains of waters, and they become blood.
. . . . .	

Sun affected.	**Sun affected.**
(4) Third part of sun, moon, and stars smitten, third part of them darkened, so that day shone not for a third part of it and the night also.	(4) Vial poured upon the sun and power given to the angel to scorch men with fire. Men scorched with great heat.
Demoniacal Power let loose.	**Kingdom full of Darkness.**
(5) Star falls from heaven. Key of bottomless pit given to him, and he releases myriads of evil spirits under the symbol of locusts, who have power to hurt for five months.	(5) Vial poured on seat of beast. His kingdom full of darkness. Men blaspheme God because of their pains and sores.
River Euphrates affected.	**River Euphrates affected.**
(6)Four angels bound in River Euphrates are loosed, and are prepared to slay the third part of men. The remnant unslain do not repent.	(6) Vial poured upon River Euphrates. Way of the kings of the East prepared. Myriads gathered to battle at Armageddon.
Lightnings, Thunderings, Earthquake, Hail.	**Lightnings, Thunderings, Earthquake, Hail.**
(7) Great voices in heaven proclaiming the world-kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. Worship of the elders. Wrath of the nations. Temple of God opened. Ark of Testament seen. Lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail.	(7) Vial poured into air. Voices, thunders, lightnings, great earthquake. Babylon judged. Every island fled away and mountains not found. Hail of terrible nature falls.

It will be seen that there exists between them an extraordinary parallelism. We have seen previously that the seventh seal was not so much a judgment in itself, as that which contained in it the seven trumpets, and was the signal of their sounding.

Are the seven vials in a like manner contained in the seventh trumpet ?

A little examination will lead us to the conclusion that this is not so, for two reasons:—

1. The seventh trumpet, or third woe, carries with it its own judgment, just like the preceding six. This is quite unlike the seventh seal.

2. We are distinctly told that when the days of the voice of the seventh angel arrived the mystery of God should be finished or completed (chap. x. 7). When the seventh trumpet sounds the voice is heard announcing the advent of the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Evidently then the vials do not follow the seventh trumpet, seeing that the seventh trumpet brings us up to God's final dealings in the establishment of the Kingdom.

Are they, then, two descriptions of the same things ?

A little reflection, spite of their extraordinary parallelism, will negative this question. Take the case of the third trumpet and of the third vial. In the one, the waters become bitter ; in the other, blood—evidently two very different things. The fourth trumpet and fourth vial confirm the difference, and put the matter beyond dispute. In the one case the sun is darkened, in the other it scorches men with great heat—two very opposite things. In the one case the supreme authority (the sun) is affected adversely in the way of perplexity, not knowing what to do ; in the other it oppresses men till they blaspheme. On these grounds we reject the theory that these series of judgments are identical.

. . . . .

We see then that whilst the first four trumpets and vials show great similarity, yet there is sufficient divergence to lead us to treat them separately.

. . . . .

But the last three trumpets and vials are so very parallel that we are forced to the conclusion that they may be at least contemporaneous.

. . . . .

But seeing the seventh trumpet finishes the mystery of God, and the vials are called the **seven last** plagues, there is only one conclusion possible, that the two sevenths coincide in point of time.

Indeed, the last three trumpets and vials afford such a close and striking parallelism that we are inclined to believe that they are contemporaneous, and it may be because of the horror of the last three vials being added to the last three trumpets that the latter are specially called woes. Further, and this is most important to our inquiry, Rev. xi. gives us the testimony of the two witnesses, that is, of a representative company in Israel, who will suffer martyrdom during the great tribulation, that is, during the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, which brings the time of judgment to a close, **and this is said to occur in the period marked by the second woe** (see verse 14). This conclusively proves that the seventh trumpet (third woe) and the seventh vial must occur simultaneously.

Taking what we have said as a whole, we come to the conclusion that probably the vials commence while the trumpets are already being sounded, the first four vials running on more quickly than the first four trumpets, thus enabling the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets and vials to take place simultaneously.

The word **third** is prominent in the trumpet judgments, thus signifying that these judgments affect the Roman earth. But no such limitation is given us in connection with the vials, save in the first and fifth. In the first vial all who come under the power of the beast are judged, and, doubtless, this extends beyond the **third** part. For this chapter xiii. 7 prepares us, as the power of the beast goes out there to " all kindreds and tongues and nations."

In the fifth vial the seat of the beast is judged. It is not so much the **third** part, but rather a blow struck at the central power.

Then again, running one's eye over the two series one can only come to the conclusion that the vials are not only more **extensive** in their range of judgment, but also more **intensive** as to their severity.

Let us now look at things in detail in connection with chapter xv. John sees a wonderful sign in heaven, seven angels having the last seven plagues which fill up and complete the wrath of God. As we have seen before, the redeemed engage John's vision first. He sees a sea of glass mingled with fire, and standing on it the martyred company, who have sealed their testimony with their blood, in connection with the persecution by the beast. The sea of glass speaks of fixed holiness, a wonderful thing to contemplate. " Mingled with fire " speaks of the fiery trial through which they arrived at this state of blessedness.

This company sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Moses sang of God's great deliverance of His people and judgment on their enemies. The song of the Lamb is evidently not the song of His redeeming love, but of His work of judgment, as is characteristic of the Book of Revelation. Verses 3 and 4 show this, as they give the substance of the song, ending with the words, " Thy judgments are made manifest."

Then John sees the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven opened. Seven angels come therefrom bearing the seven last plagues. Clad in white linen, their breasts are girded with golden girdles, thus showing that in the work of judgment all affection is restrained. The temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God, and so great is the display of that glory, though it be connected with judgment in this case, that no man is able to stand in its presence.

Chapter XVI.

The First Vial is Poured out upon the Earth. A noisome and grievous sore falls upon men who bore the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. Men voluntarily bear the mark of him who opposes God ; God will place this mark of His displeasure upon those who bear this mark, and they will feel it. Whether it is actual physical suffering, which is quite understandable, or symbolic of mental distress and affliction, we cannot say. One thing is certain. It is a question of terrible sowing of idolatry and an adequate and terrible reaping.

The Second Vial is Poured out upon the Sea. It becomes as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul dies in the sea—speaking of widespread war and bloodshed upon the masses of the people.

The Third Vial is Poured upon the Rivers and Fountains of Water. They become blood. Judgment falls not only upon the revolutionary masses of people, but upon the rivers and fountains—these speak of what is ordered and stable: a river flows between its banks, fountains are springs of refreshment.

Under the third **trumpet** the waters are made bitter, so much so that men die who drink of them.

Under the third **vial** the waters become blood. Things become evidently worse. Not only are things corrupted as under the third trumpet, but widespread death ensues. The judgment is severer and more general, and we gather that the third vial follows and accentuates the third trumpet.

The reason why judgment falls on this section of society, is because these governing bodies lend themselves to persecuting the saints and prophets. It is a question, as it ever is, of sowing and reaping. They shed the blood of saints and prophets ; blood was given them to drink. How terribly significant is the short sentence, " They are

worthy," worthy or deserving of judgment. God is always righteous in His judgments.

The Fourth Vial is Poured upon the Sun. The fourth **trumpet** darkens the sun; that is, supreme authority is first paralyzed and then unable to discern how to act.

The fourth **vial** causes the sun to scorch men, so that they blaspheme God in their pain and anger ; that is, supreme authority becomes oppressive in a high degree.

But all this does not work repentance. Such is man. Again it appears as if the fourth vial follows the fourth trumpet.

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Notice the progressive order of these vials up to this point. They fall on (1) earth ; (2) sea ; (3) rivers and fountains ; (4) sun. That is ordered society comes in for judgment, those who came willingly under the power of the beast ; then the unruly masses of mankind come in for visitation ; then the rulers ; finally the supreme authority is used in oppression.

The Fifth Vial is Poured out upon the Seat of the Beast. His kingdom is filled with darkness. Evidently the effect is terrible, as men gnaw their tongues with pain, but it is only to blaspheme the God of heaven.

The fifth **trumpet** tells of the unloosing of myriads of demoniacal forces for the extermination, under the hand of God, of all who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. If, as we believe it likely, these two judgments coalesce, we can easily understand the description of the effects of the fifth vial. Such a state of things is unsupportable, and must head up to an end.

The Sixth Vial is Poured upon the great river Euphrates, the water thereof is dried up, and the way of the Kings of the East is prepared.

The sixth **trumpet** witnesses the loosing of the four angels bound in the same river, resulting in the collection of an enormous army, the instrument of sanguinary

slaughter in the Roman earth (the third part). We shall see how these two events are contemporaneous. Details must be very carefully followed here.

To begin with, the Euphrates is the eastern boundary of the promised land. To-day Palestine measures roughly 150 miles by 50 miles, and equals about the size of Wales. The land promised to Abraham is to extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates and from the Red Sea to Lebanon, and will be many times larger. Some authorities say it will be larger than any European country save Russia.

Evidently the Euphrates being dried up means that the barrier which has kept behind it Israel's enemies loses its power to restrain. The drying up of the Euphrates has often been said to be the shrinking and waning of the power of the Turkish Empire, till it becomes no check to aggression from further east.

This shrinking has been a process going on for a long time. The Balkan States have one after another obtained their independence at the expense of Turkey, until she possesses a mere fragment of her former possessions in Europe. The great European War has seen it dispossessed of Arabia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and its shadowy suzerainty over Egypt repudiated. It is not a little remarkable that the Euphrates has been in literal process of being dried up by the dam, which has been in process of construction under Sir William Willcocks for irrigation purposes. Still we believe that the drying up of the Euphrates signifies, whatever means may be taken, that God's restraining power is removed for His own wise purpose, and the loosing of the four angels to be the setting into motion, as allowed of God, all this terrible array of force. The Kings of the East are often taken to mean the Kings of the Far East—China, Japan, etc.—but the Kings of the East in Scripture refer, we believe, to those nearer to Palestine, especially such as belonged to the second world-empire, the Medo-Persian.

Three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. Here we have the trinity of evil working together. Satanic influence of an extraordinary nature emanates, and the awful result is seen in the kings of the earth and of the whole world gathering themselves to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Here we pause. The terrible armies are gathered together, and there the vial ends. The materials for the battle of Armageddon gather together under the sixth vial—the battle itself takes place under the seventh, as we shall see.

Under the sixth **trumpet** we find sanguinary conflict affecting the Roman Empire taking place. Evidently the campaign goes on until it culminates in the great battle of Armageddon.

The Seventh Vial is Poured into the Air. At once the great voice is heard from the temple, "It is done"; as just before the seventh trumpet the Lord Himself, in angelic form, swears by God that there shall be no more delay, and that the mystery of God shall be finished. The result of both these—trumpet and vial—judgments are voices, lightnings, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail.

It is as if the end had come in the coalescing of these terrible judgments. **Everything** is shaken at last. The great city, the capital of the revived world-wide Empire, the city of Rome itself, is divided into three parts; the cities of the nations fall; great Babylon, the great corrupt ecclesiastical system, meets its doom, as we shall see in the next chapter, at the hands of the infuriated secular power; every island flees away, and the mountains are not found; it is the last terrible upheaval and convulsion of everything great and stable.

Then the vail drops upon the chronological description of events, to be resumed in chapter xix. 11, when the

intervention of Christ personally in the great battle of Armageddon takes place. But this in detail when we come to that chapter.

Chapter XVII.

This chapter is distinctly parenthetic. In it we get a picture of Rome as a religious system. The chronological order is arrested for the time being. No doubt chapter xvii. is the elaboration of the statement in chapter xvi. 19:—

> "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."

And notice too that the judgment of the false bride opens out the way for the introduction of the real bride in chapter xix. 7, 8, and xxi. 9—27, xxii. 1—5. In both cases the invitation to see comes from the same source.

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (chap. xvii. 1).

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (chap. xxi. 9).

Chapter xvi. 19 proves that the judgment of the great whore—the apostate Roman Catholic system—will take place under the seventh vial. In the case of the true bride—the heavenly city—the seer is carried "to a great and high mountain," from which vantage ground to view the scene. But in the case of the false bride he is carried away "in the spirit into the wilderness." The devout mind can appreciate the distinction. Little as this world may seem a wilderness to those who are in the vortex of it, to the spiritual it furnishes no spring of refreshment for God, no heavenly verdure.

The great whore sitting upon many waters, the kings

of the earth committing fornication with her, and the inhabitants thereof being drunk with the wine of her fornication, present a very vivid word-picture of Romanism. Her great sin is spiritual adultery. You have only to read the records of the papacy, and you will find under the guise of religion the most determined and persistent attempt at world-power. To obtain power over the proudest emperor down to the commonest person is Rome's master passion.

Some religions appeal to the rich and the educated and not to the poor, as is the case, generally speaking, with Christian Science ; others appeal to the poor and uneducated, and not to the rich and educated.

But Rome is concerned not only with the king but with the mendicant, not only with the noble but with the poor—she places under complete bondage all that she can, and never rests till all are so, or the hopelessly recalcitrant are put out of the way.

Next we read that the woman sits on the scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, and having seven heads and ten horns, thus showing that the Roman Empire carries and supports this awful system.

It is remarkable that the Greek Church, occupying in the main Russian territory, for Russia (Magog) is outside the Roman Empire, should have broken loose from Rome, thus emphasizing more than ever that it is the scarlet-coloured beast that carries the woman, that is, the Roman Empire carries the Romish religion.

The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet, the colours worn by Rome's cardinals and bishops, and significant of her claim to earthly power and dignity.

Decked with gold and precious stones and pearls awakens memories of the adornments of many churches—images, pectoral crosses, and the like—human glory and splendour, but paltry after all.

In her hand she holds a golden cup, but it is full of abominations, and the filthiness of her fornication ; that

is, abominations mean idolatries, and the filthiness of her fornication all the unspeakable corruptions that mark that system.

It is to be noticed that just as the Church is looked upon as a bride, a woman, and also a city, so Babylon is presented in chapter xvii. as a woman, and in chapter xviii. as a city. In the one case, the true bride ; in the other, the false bride, the great whore ; in the one case, the holy city ; in the other, the unholy city.

Looked at in relation to Christ, the one is the true bride, the Lamb's wife ; the other, the mother of harlots. Looked at in relation to the world, the one is the holy city, the nations walking in the light that shines through it, the light of God and the Lamb ; the other the unholy city, corrupting and defiling the nations.

The city of Babylon was the spot that first became the centre of lawlessness on the one hand, and idolatry on the other, after the break-up of the people into nations at Babel. Babylon is said to be the first city built after the flood. It thus becomes the symbol of the Romish **religion** on the side of idolatry, and of the Roman **Empire** in its political opposition to God's rule. In truth the Roman Catholic religion and the Roman Empire are inextricably mixed up, and it is in the understanding of this that the allusions to Babylon can be understood.

Some writers believe that the actual city of Babylon will be rebuilt, and that the allusion to its destruction in chapter xviii. refers to this literal city. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah liken Babylon's doom to Sodom and Gomorrah. These later cities were hopelessly overthrown, and their sites probably sunk in the depths of the Dead Sea—that extraordinary waste of waters, inland but salter than the sea, and far beneath its level. Sodom and Gomorrah will never be rebuilt. So it will be with Babylon.

" It shall never be inhabited " (Isa. xiii. 20),

. . . . .

> " Neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation " (Jer. l. 39),

are Scriptures conclusive enough on the point.

That Mesopotamia will open out again, and become of great commercial importance, we have no doubt, but that the centre of interest will ever shift there we have no expectation. As a matter of fact, with the passing away of the Head of Gold (the Babylonian world-empire) there faded away all chance of its re-appearance in anything like its former glory. The Roman Empire is the only world-empire as such that prophecy has to say to now.

Chapter xvii., however, is occupied with Babylon **religiously.** On her forehead is a name, Mystery. Apart from the light of God's Word, who could understand Rome?—her **outward** reverence, her **inward** hatred of the Word of God, her **outward** profession of piety, her **inward** corruptions which betoken the Satanic energy which is the driving power of the system.

Plain upon her forehead the student of Scripture can read her true character.

" MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The actual Babylon of old was the shadow of what was to come.

> " Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad " (Jer. li. 7).

The parallel between ancient Babylon, its rise, its splendour, its political power, its idolatries its sudden fall, is wonderfully typical of Rome political and religious, and its sudden fall.

John sees the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, and he wonders with a great wonderment. That the Jews should become apostate under the Antichrist had been foretold by Daniel, and would excite no wonder in John's mind, but that the professing

Christian religion should take to persecuting Christians, and martyring them, was enough to excite wonder.

But the prophet's wonder leads to an explanation. Verse 8 gives us with remarkable brevity the rise, past and present history, and future doom of the Roman Empire. Remember John is not seeing things now from the standpoint of A.D. 96, but from that of chapter iv. 1, that is, at the close of " the things that are," and the unfolding of things future from then.

Thus the beast is looked at as " was " and "is not."

The Roman Empire " was "—it was broken up by the Goths and Huns in the fifth century.

It " is not "; that is to say, it is in abeyance during the time covered by the expression " the things that are."

It ascends out of the bottomless pit, its Satanic force and power are thus indicated, and it goes into perdition, foreshadowing its doom. The verse ends up with the remarkable expression, " Behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is," thus showing that whilst the Roman Empire does not actually exist, yet all the elements for its revival are at hand. It exists potentially.

The seven heads on the beast are said to be seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. Here the imperial city of Rome is clearly indicated. " The city of the seven hills " is a well-known poetical description of the city so closely identified with the Papacy.

There are seven kings.

Five had fallen, five phases of the governing power of the Roman Empire.

A sixth existed as John wrote.

Then he stretches his eyes to the future. " The other is not yet come ; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

Who is the seventh ? It is impossible to dogmatize. The late Mr. J. N. Darby writes. "My impression is, that the first Napoleon and his brief empire is the seventh, and we have now to wait for the development of the

last " (**Synopsis,** 3rd edition, revised, page 529). Such an opinion is worth considering, but the revered author would be the last to dogmatize on the point.

Certainly the history of the first Napoleon was so remarkable as at any rate to furnish a type of the head of the revived Roman Empire. Napoleon arose out of the chaos of the French Revolution. The Beast will arise out of the chaos of a wider revolution; "I . . . saw a Beast arise out of the sea," said John. Napoleon's course was startlingly meteoric. He set kings upon their thrones, and for a moment there was a semblance of a revived Roman Empire. His fall was sudden, just as the Beast's will be. Napoleon is certainly an instance on a small scale of that which will be enacted in the future on a wider scale.

The eighth king is identified as the Beast. Eight is the resurrection number, and it may well stand as symbolic of a resurrected or revived Roman Empire.

The ten horns on the head of the Beast are plainly said to be ten kings, which have no kingdom as yet, but receive such for one brief hour from the Beast.

As a result of the Great War a wave of democracy has swept away ancient dynasties in Europe.

One cannot imagine the representatives of ancient proud dynasties tamely submitting to a man of Napoleonic ability and meteoric arrival at the top of affairs, but one can understand countries, seething in revolution, with men in their midst strong enough to rule in conjunction with others, but not strong enough to stand alone, gladly submitting to a federation of nations under this wonderful head as the only way of carrying on government at all in the face of things as they will be then.

Fear, we believe, may probably be the driving factor in this League of Nations—a name the Great War has familiarized us with already.

These Kings or Dictators will act as with one mind and

strength, and give their power and strength to their overlord.

In verse 14 we have the battle of Armageddon given in a nutshell ; its detail is furnished in chapter xix. War is made against the Lamb, but the Lamb must and does overcome.

The last four verses of the chapter give us the doom of the woman, who was carried by the Beast. Evil always overreaches itself, and this fearful idolatrous system is no exception.

The ten Kings **and** the Beast (as some translators show) hate the whore. Her desire for power, and her ceaseless Jesuitical way in seeking to bring it about, her ruthless disregard of anything but her own aims, will lead to such exasperation that the ten Kings and the Beast will overthrow her system.

In the words of Scripture, they shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. Making her naked and eating her flesh evidently point to the spoliation of her buildings, endowments, and emoluments ; burning her with fire, to the complete destruction of her system. This must take place before the Lamb destroys those who make war upon Him.

Chapter XVIII.

If chapter xvii. is a description of Babylon—the corrupt ecclesiastical system Rome—this chapter gives us its doom. That the destruction of Babylon—this false bride—is of vast moment, preparing the way for the true bride to have her rightful place, is proved by the full way her doom is predicted and the joyful relief experienced when it is carried out.

Chapter xiv. 8 gives us the announcement of the angel that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." Likened to a city there, it is easy to identify it with Babylon the woman, the mother of harlots, as our verse tells she made all

nations drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Chapter xvii. describes Babylon the woman, and foretells her doom in verse 16.

Chapter xviii. 1-3 tells us again at the mouth of a mighty angel, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen"; verse 4 bids the saints come out of her, and the rest of the chapter describes her doom.

Chapter xix. 1-7 gives us the unrestrained joy of the inhabitants in heaven at her fall, and in the introduction of the true Bride. This all shows how immensely important the subject is.

The unutterably wicked history of Rome, her persecution, her killing the saints of God, her depths of corruption, her harlotry, her subtilty, her arrogance, her attempt to subjugate the world, should ever be borne in mind. No words can paint too black her spiritual wickedness.

Let us now examine briefly chapter xviii. in detail.

A mighty angel comes down from heaven, the earth lightened with his glory, announcing that Babylon is fallen, is fallen. He tells us in one brief pregnant sentence that that which professed the name of Christ had become so corrupt as to be the very dwelling-place of demons, the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

He tells us these three things concerning her—

(1) The nations became drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication ;

(2) The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her ;

(3) The merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

But before her doom is carried out, God's people are called upon to separate from her. It may be wondered how true saints could be found in such a system. In answer it must be noticed that it is not the angel having great power, who mightily with a strong voice proclaims

that Babylon is fallen, but John says:—

> "I heard **a voice from heaven,** saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (verse 4).

It is **this voice from heaven** addressing God's true people that carries on the narrative. This heavenly voice describes **generally** the unspeakable wickedness of Babylon, her sins reaching to heaven, culminating in her sudden and dramatic doom; and viewing these things **as a whole,** that is, from start to finish of her history, the saints are invited to clear themselves of such corruption.

When the Lord comes for His Church, we rejoice to think that many, who have not known the depths of Satan in connection with Rome, will be taken out of it, and not one true Christian will be found in this idolatrous system. Rome will then become apostate.

We believe, then, that verse 4 must be a general statement, having a voice for all God's true people from the day John penned the words to the present, and as long as there are true Christians connected with the system.

But better far to have heard the exhortation, and responded to it, than that the Lord's coming should find any of His own connected with it.

The voice from heaven calmly, but with tremendous power of vivid statement, describes the doom of Babylon. The persecutor is to get paid back double for all her persecutions. The terrible cup she made others drink is filled double for her to drink. She had been complacent, glorifying herself, and living deliciously. But in one day, suddenly, her plagues come; death, mourning, famine, fire, utter destruction overtake her.

The ten horns of the beast, we are told, shall hate the woman, strip her naked and burn her flesh with fire. Whilst they are the instruments of her doom, the kings of the earth will bewail her doom. Hating her with a deadly hatred because of her unspeakable pretensions to rule, and determined to bring them to an end, on the other

side they will mourn that no longer will she minister to their sinful pleasures.

The merchants, also, weep and mourn over her. There is a commercial money-making side to Rome. Indeed, if you take the money-making out of religious schemes, such as Christian Science, Millennial Dawnism, etc., they would assuredly fall to the ground. Rome holds the palm pre-eminently for this unholy commerce in spiritual things.

The list of her merchandise is illuminating. First gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls, all for super-adornment ; fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet, again for adornment in clothing ; vessels of ivory, of precious wood, of brass, of iron, of marble, speaking of luxury ; cinnamon, odours, ointments, frankincense, of voluptuous worship ; wine, oil, flour, wheat, beasts, sheep, of good living ; horses and chariots, of ease and style ; slaves [bodies] and souls of men—traffic in all that a man has—wind up the awful list. Rome traffics in souls, keeps men in slavish bondage by the fear of purgatory and the like. The twin sisters—fear and superstition—exact money from the rich and poor alike in truly rapacious style.

The merchants afar off, shipmasters and sailors* afar off, weep and wail as they see in the smoke of Babylon's burning the end of their profiteering.

But if men mourn, heaven rejoices. The mighty angel takes a stone like a great millstone, and casting it into the sea, says,

> " Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all,"

reminding us of Jeremiah binding up his prophecy against the actual city of Babylon to a stone, and casting it into

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*It is significant that Mussolini has made Rome a port, by building a big canal from the sea and causing a big area of water to be available for shipping right against Rome itself. This port is named Port Mussolini.

the river Euphrates, and pronouncing its irrevocable doom.

It is important to see that the actual city, Babylon (=Babel, **confusion**), began in independence of God, was characterized by idolatry (the golden image) and the persecution of God's people (the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace), and was utterly and suddenly overthrown in the midst of her feasting (Belshazzar's feast and overthrow by Darius the Median). Thus it stands as a type of Rome in her idolatry, her persecutions, and her sudden and irrevocable doom.

Chapter XIX.

This chapter begins with the greatest outburst of joy recorded thus far in the book. Much people in heaven praise God; the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fall down, and worship God that sits on the throne, saying, " Amen ; Alleluia."

At the bidding of the voice from heaven all God's servants, small and great, are called upon to praise God, and respond with one voice as of a great multitude, as of many waters, as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying:

"Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

But not only is there joy in the destruction of the false bride, but joy in the marriage of the true Bride. For the first time since we left the consideration of " the things that are "—that is, the Church period ending with the rapture—we see the saints of this present dispensation presented to us as the Church. True, the four and twenty elders in heaven are mentioned repeatedly, but as we have seen, that term must include the Old Testament believers as well as those of the New Testament, and therefore they are looked upon as representative of all **believers,** and the Church, as such, is not presented to us in this way. But here we have the Church as the Bride

presented to us. The time of her marriage and public display is at hand.

This significant event of the marriage of the Lamb is given us in two verses, but it is of the deepest importance. The wife makes herself ready and is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. This we are told is the righteousness (or **righteousnesses**) of the saints—the product of God's work by His Spirit in the lives of His people, now seen in display for the eye of the Bridegroom. It is not here the righteousness of God which is upon all them that believe, but **practical** righteousnesses in the lives of the believers. The **plural**—the correct rendering—righteousnesses—is significant. Becoming attire for the Bride, yet it entirely redounds to the glory of the Bridegroom.

Then verse 9 gives us the blessedness of the guests—those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. In this blessedness, angels and saints—Old Testament saints, and martyred saints in connection with the temptation that comes upon all the earth—will partake.

Never again in the Book of Revelation do we read of the four and twenty elders. The reason is not far to seek. Hitherto, since we considered the book from chapter iv., there has been no need to differentiate between the Old Testament believers and those of the New Testament. But now, with the introduction of the Bride, and the announcement of the marriage of the Lamb, the distinction is necessary.

So after introducing us so remarkably and distinctly to the Bride, the angel bids John write, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb," thus indicating the blessed portion of the Old Testament believers and others, as we have seen. John the Baptist described himself as the friend of the Bridegroom, and in so doing described the whole of the believers in the Old Testament dispensation. The Bride is still closer to the Bridegroom, but how favoured are

the friends of the Bridegroom, and how supremely satisfied they will be with this favour.

At the sight of all this blessedness John falls at the feet of the angel, and worships. But the angel reminds John that he is but a fellow-servant, and that his testimony, like John's, is of Jesus, and that testimony is the spirit of prophecy.

The whole Book of Revelation is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Chapter i. 2 speaks of it as "the testimony of Jesus Christ." That this the the spirit of prophecy is true, as all prophecy leads up to the unfolding that this book contains.

In verse 11 we have the resumption of the narrative which was broken by the invitation recorded in chapter xvii. 1. Chapter xix. 11 links on with chapter xvi. 21.

From verse 11 to 21 we get a description of the battle of Armageddon. Vast hosts will be gathered to Palestine under the sixth vial, as also under the sixth trumpet, which we believe are co-terminous. Armageddon (meaning the **hill** Megiddo) gives a topical name to this fight.

It is very interesting that Zechariah, describing the deep and abject repentance of Jerusalem as the result of the great tribulation, likens it to "the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon."*

Note the last proud assault of vast contending armies before the Millennium is set up. Jerusalem is the prize in view. It is called the battle of Armageddon (the **hill** Megiddo); whereas the place of repentance and restoration for Israel is likened to mourning in the **valley** of Megiddo.

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*"Hadadrimmon is, according to the ordinary interpretation of Zech. xii. 11, a place in the valley of Megiddo, named after two Syrian idols, where a national lamentation was held for the death of King Josiah in the last of the four great battles which have made the plain of Esdraelon famous in Hebrew history (see 2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22; Josephus, **Ant.** x. 5, § 1)."

How true it is that every valley shall be exalted and every hill brought low, that repentance leads to blessing and uplifting, and pride and rebellion bring abasement and destruction.

A new thing happens now. Hitherto Christ has only appeared, we believe, in John's vision, in angelic form in connection with governmental judgments upon earth. Here He intervenes **in person.** He is presented to us under names and by descriptions that present His person in all its majesty and power. The heart is awed as we read it.

He comes as the Deliverer of His earthly people, and as the Judge and Destroyer of their enemies, only that judgment here takes the form of war and utter extermination.

He comes on a white horse, bespeaking victory, and victory that leaves nothing doubtful. All the casualties are on one side. We shall presently see their nature.

He is called "Faithful and True."

He is presented to us in the opening of the Book as "the Faithful Witness"—witness in His beautiful life to God in His nature and attributes.

He is presented as "He that is holy, He that is true," in the address to the Philadelphian Church.

But here His titles have to do with judgment. There is nothing vindictive or capricious in these truly awful happenings. God's character in righteousness is upheld by these judgments. They are necessary. They must be. They cannot be otherwise.

> " In righteousness He doth judge and make war.
> His eyes were as a flame of fire" (verses 11 and 12).

His discernment can pierce through every sham and subterfuge. He makes no mistakes. Sin and judgment are perfectly equipoised by Him; sin—as offence against God's holiness; judgment—as sin's due reward.

"On His head were many crowns" (**diadēma**), that is, the crowns of the Ruler, the Monarch, the Despot.

Only thrice is this word used in Scripture. The great red dragon, the Devil, has seven crowns upon his **heads,** complete yet undisplayed assumption of power; the beast, the head of the revived Roman Empire, has ten crowns upon his **horns,** fullest responsibility of earthly and displayed power, yet assumed. Their triumph must be but short-lived. Their blasphemous assumption must cease. Their crowns are taken from them by **His** hand.

Only one head can rightly wear the diadem, and it is His. The number of crowns on the heads of the Dragon and the horns of the Beast can be counted. But His cannot be counted.

> "On His head were **many** crowns."

How worthy is He of every crown that decks His brow.

> "He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself."

Instinctively we are reminded of His own words:—

> "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27).

We know Him, but we shall never know the inscrutability of His person. The attempt to pry into this has always led to sorrow and confusion, whoever has made the attempt. The reverent mind accepts the limitation the Lord Himself puts upon our knowledge in this direction. Jesus is very God. What a statement! He is very Man. Yet His person is One. We have the testimony of Scripture as to this. We cannot understand how it can be. It is because Scripture states it. Reason however penetrative, intellect however subtle, cannot pass this barrier. As the Christian poet happily sang:—

> "It is darkness to my intellect,
> But sunshine to my heart."

We can bow in adoring worship at the feet of Him who is God and Man, one glorious Person.

> "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood,"

speaks of the character of His work and judgment—not sessional, as in Matt. xxiv., but retributive as in war.

"His name is called the Word of God."

How the Spirit of God lingers with delight over each detail.

Heavenly armies follow Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white. They follow in His train. He alone has the vesture dipped in blood. His followers are on white horses, and arrayed in white. No hate of man can touch them. No earthly artillery can reach them. As at the cross.

"The mighty work was all His own,
Though we shall share His glorious throne,"

so here the mighty work of judgment will be all His own, though the heavenly armies will share in the joy of victory.

Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword that He should smite the nations. He shall rule them with a rod of iron. He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Terrible sight for His foes. Happy sight for His persecuted earthly people thus to behold the might and majesty of their Deliverer.

Following on this glorious description of Christ, an invitation is given by an angel standing in the sun, that is as authorized by supreme and heavenly power, inviting the fowls to the supper of the great God that they may eat the flesh of captains, of mighty men, of horses, and their riders, of all men whether free or bond, small or great.

In one short verse we have the gathering of the Beast and the Kings of the Earth, and their armies, to make war against Christ and His army.

There is no detailed account of the battle; only the result of it is given to us. Two prisoners are taken, the Beast and the false Prophet, the Antichrist, and both are cast alive into the lake of fire. They will be the first recorded occupants of that place prepared for the Devil and

his angels. The rest, the prodigious armies of the Beast and the Kings of the Earth, are slain by the breath of the Lord, reminding us, though on a much larger scale, of the occasion when 185,000 Assyrians were smitten by the angel of the Lord (see 2 Kings xix. 35). Thus ends the great battle of Armageddon as seen in this Book.

Chapter XX.

This chapter opens with an angel from heaven with the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, laying hold on the old serpent, the Devil, and binding him for a thousand years, that is, during the course of the Millennium. The bottomless pit, or, as it should be more correctly named, the abyss, is not hell, the lake of fire, but a place where God can confine evil, allowing it liberty if it be His will, as under the fifth trumpet the angel used the key to open it, thus allowing hordes of demoniacal legions to overrun the earth.

But in this case the key is used to shut up the abyss and confine therein Satan as prisoner. Yet even in this act we are told the length of his imprisonment—a thousand years—and how he must once more appear on the earth for a little season.

Verse 4 introduces us to the **sessional** judgment of Christ, as recorded in Matt. xxv. 31—46. If the armies of heaven do not participate in the fighting—one blow from the sword out of the mouth of Him who rides the white horse suffices for that—here we find the saints set to judge the world.

There are two classes mentioned in this verse—**they,** referring to the saints generally, and **the souls** of them that had been martyred since the rapture of the Church, during the time of tribulation on the earth.

The Millennium is given us in one short sentence: "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Of course Rev. xxi. 9-27; xxii. 1-5 gives us the Church as the centre of administration during the Millennium,

throwing much light on the subject, as also do Old Testament prophecies, such as Isa. lxv. 17-25.

It is very interesting to note that when Isaiah speaks of "New heavens and a new earth," he refers to the regenerated, renewed, Millennial earth. A cursory reading of the passage will prove this statement. It speaks of Jerusalem in a very distinct way ; it speaks of the possibility of death: " The child shall die an hundred years old"; and of sin: "The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Doubtless all the moral glory of the reign of Christ will go on into the eternal state, thus linking on the expression, " New heavens and a new earth," with the New Testament expression, but only in a moral way.

But when Rev. xxi. 1 speaks of a new heaven and a new earth, it refers to the eternal state. After the Millennium has run its course, and Satan has risen in his last fearful rebellion, and met once and for all his doom, after the present heavens and earth shall have been destroyed, as prophesied in chapter xx. 11, we see the eternal state in all its blessedness. It is certainly a **new** creation, not a renovation. But more as to this later on.

A little reflection helps us to perceive the rightness of a Millennium upon **this** earth. Christ has an earthly people, and He has claims of a special kind upon them. These are to be acknowledged. Thus the rejection of the Messiah is to be followed in the ways of God by His acceptance and reign.

In the eternal state all distinction as to Jew and Gentile will have passed away; not so in the Millennium. It is seemly that the very place where the Messiah has been rejected shall be the place of His acceptance and glory.

Verses 5 and 6 are most important, giving us the blessedness of the first resurrection, and putting an interval of at least one thousand years between the first and the second, informing us that those raised at the first resurrection are blessed, and that they become the priests

of God and His Christ, reigning with Him a thousand years. How any one able to read can contend for the doctrine of a general resurrection in the face of this plain Scripture one is at a loss to conceive!

It is not a little remarkable that the expression " first resurrection " should not be used till we are on the very threshold of the Millennium.

If the resurrection of the Old Testament saints, and of the New Testament saints who have passed away, at the second coming of Christ **completed** the first resurrection, it is reasonable to suppose that it would be so designated.

But very evidently from this passage of Scripture it includes all those who are raised for blessing, and who will take part in the Millennial reign of Christ.

It is plain that the resurrection, which will take place at the second coming of Christ, will form **the great event** of the first resurrection, but that there will be **supplementary events** completing the first resurrection is likewise clear.

The fifth seal discloses one of these supplementary events. The saints martyred whilst the opening seals run their course are bidden to rest for a little season till their fellow-servants and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled, that is, they had to wait for the resurrection of their bodies till those, who should later join them in martyrdom, might be raised with them.

In chapter xi. resurrection is affirmed of the two witnesses in the great tribulation, symbolical, we believe, of a godly remnant, who shall give adequate testimony during that awful time of trial, and who shall seal their testimony with their blood. This class probably answers to " their fellow-servants . . . and their brethren " mentioned in chapter vi. 11.

These two companies would appear to be classed together in chapter xx. 4, described as

" the souls of them that were beheaded for the wit-

> ness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands."

The following verse affirms the blessedness of those, who shall have part in this glorious first resurrection, most evidently including all mentioned in the previous verse. The "they" in that verse refers to the four and twenty elders, who sit upon thrones, and then the souls of the beheaded are seen, immediately before the statements of " the first resurrection."

These later classes had been called for **earthly** blessing, to look for the coming King. By their martyrdom they are rewarded with a **heavenly** blessing, they are priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Of course the Church has beyond this her special and unique place of blessing and glory.

The Millennium will begin by " these My brethren " and the sheep of Matt. xxv. going into eternal life, that is, into Millennial blessing. Under the peaceful sway of Christ, when the curse of sin shall be lifted off the earth for the time being, population will largely increase and multitudes be born, who will not all be converted, and who, alas! will prove ready tools for Satan's plans, when he is loosed from the abyss after the Millennium has run its course. We pause to ask, Will the personal reign of Christ have altered men, will He so have impressed upon them righteousness and peace, that men will be able to resist the wiles of Satan? Alas! no. Man in the flesh is incorrigibly bad. Nothing but a new creation will put things right.

Multitudes, like the sand of the sea, from the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, will come up as energized and marshalled by Satan in this last impious rising against God. The sad and evil history of fallen man is about to be closed. They come up against the beloved city—Jerusalem. Fire comes from God and devours them.

It is interesting to note that in the **pre**-Millennial battle it is **Christ** who slays His enemies by the breath of His mouth. In this **post**-Millennial battle it is **God** that consumes His foes.

Gog and Magog figure in Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. as the enemies of God's people in pre-Millennial times ; here again they are enemies in post-Millennial times. In Ezekiel prior to the Millennium multitudes are killed. It will take seven months to bury the slain, and the captured instruments of war will furnish enough fuel to supply the needs of the Israelitish nation for seven years, without having to cut down growing timber ; in Revelation in post-Millennial times Gog and Magog and their multitudes are consumed outright.

This is followed by the devil being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the Beast and the False Prophet are, to be tormented there day and night for ever and ever. At length in the wisdom of God the arch-enemy of the human race meets his doom.

This is a deeply interesting passage. First, it disposes of the man-made theory of annihilation. The Beast and False Prophet will have been more than a thousand years in the lake of fire, when their associate in evil shall have found his place with them. No hint is given but that their condition is one of fixed torment. As to the Devil, it is solemnly stated that he will be tormented day and night for ever and ever—the strongest asseveration in human language of eternal torment.

And now at one step we leave time behind and enter eternity—solemn moment. The Seer beholds a great white throne. Everything is stated positively. There is, and can be, no comparison. A great white throne! It stands by itself in its vast proportions and unstained dazzling purity. The last session of judgment is entered upon.

And John sees Him, who sits upon it. We know the Sitter to be the Lord Jesus, for does not John tell us in

another place that " the Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son " (John v. 22)?

From His face the earth and heaven flee away—that earth that witnessed the sin of our first parents, that beheld the crucifixion of the Son of God, that has been the theatre of man's recent impious attempts under the leadership of Satan against God and His throne—that earth, scarred by sin, saturated by blood and tears—that earth and its heaven will for ever pass away. With the destruction of the material universe, as foretold here and in 2 Peter iii. 10, time will cease to be, and the great white throne will be set up **in eternity.**

The second resurrection takes place—" the resurrection of damnation " (John v. 29). All the sleeping saints will have been raised at the first resurrection, awakened to bliss and happiness untold, and the living saints changed in a moment and caught up with them to the clouds at the second coming of Christ.

None but the wicked dead will participate in the second resurrection. The books are opened, and another book, the book of life. Man in accountable. His deeds are marked, whether he be small or great. Every one is judged according to his works.

Death and Hades deliver up the dead in them, and are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. This is equivalent to saying that the wicked dead raised at the second resurrection are doomed righteously by the testimony of the recording books to the lake of fire.

Death is not a place but a condition, viz., that of the body without the soul. Hades is not a place but a condition, the correlative of Death, viz., that of the soul without the body. When the soulless bodies are reunited to the bodyless souls, the resurrected sinners will represent Death and Hades, and in their persons Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire.

From other Scriptures we know that doom to be eternal. Death never means annihilation, but always change of

condition. Death has not annihilated the bodies, for they are raised ; Hades has not annihilated the souls, for they are summoned to re-inhabit the bodies of resurrection.

Nor will they be annihilated in the lake of fire. There the fire is not quenched nor does the worm die. Everlasting punishment is as everlasting as everlasting life (see Matt. xxv. 46).

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For those who would inquire into this subject more fully we would introduce them to a pamphlet to be obtained of our publishers.*

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Chapter XXI.

The first eight verses of this chapter give us further light as to the eternal state. John sees a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, as we have seen. There shall be no more sea. We believe the sea is to be understood here in its symbolic meaning. There shall be no more uprising of the will of man, no more revolutionary upheavals, such as had characterized the old world in its last and saddest days.

The only stable, happy form of rule is set up, that is Theocracy: the rule of God. Here it is all new creation, and the thought is more God dwelling than God ruling.

A father rules in his home, but sad is the home where the predominant thought is that of the father ruling rather than that of dwelling. Here there is no sin needing to be controlled. Then shall be fulfilled what we have often sung with delight:—

> "All taint of sin shall be removed,
> All evil done away ;
> And we shall dwell with God's Beloved
> Through God's eternal day."

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*HADES and Eternal Punishment. By the present writer. Price 6d. by post, 7d.

First and foremost we get the Church's place in this wonderful scene. The Church for whom Christ died, His body and His Bride, the subject of eternal counsel ; the Church with every trace of her sad, sad history removed for ever, the triumph of the patient care of Christ, who, sanctifying and cleansing her by the washing of water by the word, had a thousand years before presented her to Himself an assembly of glory without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—the Church, we repeat, here seen by John descending from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband.

What a moment for the heart of Christ! What a moment for the heart of His own. Do not our souls thrill with blissful expectancy as we contemplate such a scene ?

Note that John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, as a Bride. The holy city is the character of the Church in the Millennium as the vessel of administration in the hands of God, but here administration is not the thought, but the deep eternal affection of gratified love. Is there any day in the history of a man equal to the day when he possesses himself of his bride ?

And this marriage relationship is not a convenient but a **designed** illustration of Christ and the Church. The Apostle Paul concludes his exhortation as to the married estate with the significant words:

> " This is a great mystery: but I speak **concerning Christ and the Church** " (Eph. v. 32).

A great voice is heard out of heaven, saying:

> " Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

It is interesting that when the Church stands in relation to the Millennium the word **temple** is used, whereas in the eternal state the word **tabernacle** is used. The temple speaks of God dwelling in the midst of an earthly people in the land.

> " The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple " (Mal. iii. 1).

But the tabernacle is " the shadow of **heavenly** things " (Heb. viii. 5), and therefore of **eternal** things. The only distinction in the eternal state is between the tabernacle (the Church) and men.

No distinction is maintained, but that which had its origin in a past eternity. Dispensational and governmental distinctions obtaining in this earth will cease with this earth. Distinctions formed in eternity will be found in eternity ; those formed in time will cease with time. In Christ, in new creation there is

> " Neither Jew nor Greek, . . . bond nor free, . . . male nor female" (Gal. iii. 28).

The distinction between nations—between Jew and Gentile—began in time, and ends with time.

God wipes away all tears ; there is no more death, sorrow, cry of pain, nor distress in that scene where

> "Sin, nor want, nor woe, nor death can come."

It is striking that the description here given in verse 4 contents itself with stating what will **not** be present. Eliminate sin, and you eliminate Death and its accompaniments—sorrow and pain. Tears are the effect of physical or mental distress. There will be neither in that blissful scene.

We are not told what the positive delights of that place are, save the highest of all—God in fullest harmony with His creatures, and the creature in fullest harmony with God, and that on **new creation** lines, all based in righteousness on the ground of the redemptive work of Christ.

Added to this there will be the eternal display of God's counsels in the Church throughout that eternity. This is witnessed in the words, " Behold, the tabernacle of God is with **men.**" God, the tabernacle of God, men, fill up the scene.

The One who sits on the throne declares that He makes all things **new,** a very distinct word, not meaning "new" in contradistinction to " old," but " **new** " as never hav-

ing been in existence before, either in kind or in itself, and never getting old, for nothing and nobody can ever get old in new creation.

The One upon the throne is Christ, for He declares Himself:

> "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End."

There is nothing before Him nor after Him. All is held in relation to Him from eternity to eternity.

How sweet it is to see the heart of God coming out, at such a point in the narrative:

> "I will give unto Him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely,"

and to notice the gracious encouragement to the overcomer.

Then in one solemn verse we get the eternal state of the wicked:

> "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (verse 8).

"Shall have their part," precludes the thought of annihilation; nor is there any hint that after the lapse of time, however long, souls will pass into bliss. There is no trace of either annihilationism or universalism in this passage. Surely if God intended to annihilate the sinner, or on the other hand to purify by the fire of purgatory in order to universally bless all, He would have clearly told us in His Word. It is significant that this verse 8 stands just where it does, in that section of the Book which alone deals with the eternal state, whether for bliss as in verses 1—4, or for judgment as in verse 8.

THE CHURCH IN THE MILLENNIUM.

Chapters xxi. 9—27 and xxii. 1—5 bring us back to one of the angels with the seven vials full of the seven last plagues. In other words, we are brought back from the

eternal state to the time when judgments are being poured upon this earth just prior to the Millennium.

Hitherto we have not had indicated the part the Church will play in the Millennium. In general terms we read in the previous chapter of those who take part in the first resurrection being priests of God and of Christ and reigning with Him a thousand years. But here we have the distinctive position of the Church in relation to the Millennial earth outlined for us.

First note carefully the similarity of the wording of the invitation to behold the judgment of the false bride and the display of the true Bride. The false bride attempted display ; the true waits for it in relation to, and as given by, the Bridegroom.

That is, exit the false bride, enter the true Bride. The fact that one of the seven angels connected with the seven last plagues draws attention to the judgment of the one, and the place of blessing of the other, proves that the latter has to do with the Church in the Millennium, for it is then she shall be displayed.

Note another point very carefully:

"I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (chap. xxi. 2).

"I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (chap. xxi. 9, 10).

Doubtless the Church is here presented under the symbol of a Woman, a Wife, a Bride, a City, just as in Paul's epistles she is spoken of as a Bride, a Body, a Temple, the Assembly of God.

In the first passage, keeping up the symbols for the sake of clearness, John tells us he saw **a city.** What should we expect him to describe ? Surely a city! But no, he tells of the city **as a BRIDE,** adorned for her husband. Evidently then it is the **Bride** aspect of the Church that **is presented in the former Scripture.**

In the second passage John is invited to see the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. What should we expect him to describe? Surely the Bride! But no, he is shown **that Great CITY, the Holy Jerusalem.** Evidently then it is the **city** aspect of the Church that is presented in the latter Scripture.

The **Bride** aspect is the eternal aspect of the Church—the Church as the joy and delight of the heart of Christ, presented to us under that symbol, as describing the highest joy and delight possible. The closest tie in nature is that of husband and wife—"they two shall be one flesh." The closest tie in new creation is that of the Bridegroom and the Bride.

The **City** aspect is the Millennial aspect of the Church, and speaks of rule, government, organization. The details will bear out this distinction.

In the eternal state all distinction between Jew and Gentile, and nation and nation, is gone. There will be no Emperors or Kings then—God is supreme.

In the Millennium such distinctions are owned.

In the eternal state God speaks of "His people" (verse 3).

In the Millennium God speaks of "the nations of them which are saved," and "the Kings of the earth" (verse 24), and "of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (verse 12).

But for a true understanding of this passage it must be clear that we are contemplating the glorified Church as the Bride of Christ in her relation to an earthly people in the Millennium. For instance, Rev. xxii. 3 says, "There shall be no more curse." This is indeed gloriously true of the Church, once and for all beyond the reach of sin and failure, but it is not true of the Millennial earth, where a sinner that is an hundred years old shall die, and when at its end there will be seen as great a rebellion against God as ever known in the history of the world.

Let us now look at the details of the City.

First, John is carried away in spirit to a great and high mountain, there to behold this ravishing vision. When invited to look upon the doom of the false bride, Babylon, he is carried in spirit into the wilderness. The wilderness speaks of how God looks at that which is the product of man, even religiously, as led by Satan. Nothing His eye can rest upon with approval or delight. Everything about it is offensive to Him.

But to understand the heavenly city it is necessary to be lifted up in the power of God's Spirit to see with God's eyes what He sees. Balaam was taken to "the tops of the rocks" to behold the vision of the Almighty. In the same way Ezekiel was set "upon a very high mountain" when he had a vision of an earthly city that should be according to God.

The Holy City is not heaven, for it descends OUT OF HEAVEN from God. It is a description of God's people in this dispensation as the Church in relation to an earthly system of blessing in the Millennium. Her origin is heavenly—"out of heaven"—and divine—"from God."

She has the glory of God, and her light is as a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, the jasper stone symbolizing the glory of God. With what relief we turn from the contemplation of the Church as a professing body under the discriminating searching gaze of the Son of God to this scene. Thyatira, with its depths of corruption and wickedness; Sardis with its lifelessness and formality; Philadelphia, the brightest spot, but yet characterized by little strength; Laodicea, with her nauseous lukewarmness, her assumption, her ignorance of her true state, present us with a picture sad beyond words, yet having in it its bright spots. But here all that is past! Only the fruit of God's work—the product of Christ's death, the outcome of His high priestly grace and intercession, the result of the Holy Spirit's gracious and patient dealings—is seen, and the result is incomparable in splen-

dour and glory. It bespeaks the triumph of God. Could anything finer be said than that it has the glory of God?

It has a wall great and high, speaking of security from danger, and separation from evil. It is only as we are kept in the power of the Spirit that the saints are secure from outside danger, and kept in godly separation from evil. Then it will be so absolutely and for ever. What a prospect!

It has also twelve gates, and, as the City is foursquare, on every side from which the City is approached there is uniformity of appearance and abundant entrance. If the wall were without gates it were a sorry thing. There is not only the exclusion of all that is evil, but also the inclusion of all that is of God, a happy, perfect balance.

The height of the wall is 144 cubits, that is, 12 × 12. The number of gates is twelve. These numbers speak of full and perfect administration.

Alas! some Christians are all walls, all exclusive, all for shutting out, no bowels of compassion, no yearning of heart characterizing them. Others are all gates, all inclusive, and in their largeheartedness and zeal forget the holiness of that which bears Christ's name. But in the Holy City everything will be perfect.

In these gates are the names written of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and at the gates are twelve angels or messengers. A gate in Scripture usage is the scene of judgment, the place where those who had a grievance came and stated their case. It answers to the thought of our High Court of Justice.

The above, then, teaches that the Church will judge Israel, and Israel will rejoice in it, for the Church will be the agent of her Lord, and will deal wisely and righteously, and Israel will recognize this.

The City has twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

It may be asked, where does the Apostle Paul come in? The answer can be given in a two fold way. First, twelve

is a number symbolic of administration. There were actually thirteen tribes in Israel, but the people are always addressed as twelve tribes. James addresses himself " to the twelve tribes scattered abroad."

Second, the writer has often in his mind likened the Apostle Paul's position among and in relation to the twelve apostles to Levi's position among and in relation to the twelve tribes. Just as the tribe of Levi stood by itself, having territory throughout the tribes, so Paul stood by himself, and his teaching formed, doubtless, all the apostles.

The foundations speak of stability, twelve emphasizing again the administrative character of the City. The names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb remind us that saints are " built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone " (Eph. ii. 20).

And this, by the way, shows conclusively that it is not the earthly bride, Israel, that is symbolized by the Heavenly city, as some think, but the Heavenly Bride, the Church, which is so set forth.

The vision given to Ezekiel (chap. xl. **et seq.**) of the earthly city, symbolical of the earthly bride, though a real city, differs from John's vision in such a way as to show that the two are distinct, though in relation to each other.

Ezekiel speaks of a reed to measure therewith ; John writes of a **golden** reed—the reed symbolizing human measurement ; the **golden** reed symbolizing that what is measured, while limited, is yet complete in divine righteousness.

Ezekiel speaks of the earthly city being four thousand five hundred cubits square. Four hundred cubits make one furlong. But the Holy City is 12,000 furlongs **cube,** for we read the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

In the one case the measure is comprehensible, as being

within the compass of an earthly city ; in the other it is incomprehensible, save as symbolic. It seems to indicate that the Church is the greatest thing of all God's handiwork, and yet, vast as it is, it has limits and can be measured.

No doubt the intense form of the administrative number 12, that is 12,000, speaks of the greatest heights of administration the world has ever seen, and this is held by the Church during the Millennium under Christ.

The building of the wall is of jasper, the thought connecting itself with the glory of God, as brought out in verse 11 ; whilst the City is of pure gold, like unto clear glass, the whole symbolizing a scene of fixed righteousness.

The foundations of the wall are garnished with all manner of precious stones. Again the number twelve comes in with its usual significance. Indeed, the number twelve and its multiples are stamped again and again most significantly upon the Holy City.

The names of the twelve apostles are found in the foundations. Just as one gem has one colour and another flashes another colour, so one apostle is distinguished by one line of ministry, and another apostle by another line. God does not repeat Himself, and He gives to each as He wills.

The twelve gates are twelve pearls. The Church is the pearl of great price, and in each gate being of one pearl we see how God would present to Israel and the nations the thought of the preciousness of the Church to Christ, even though the Church be viewed in administration, as the number twelve again indicates. The street of the city is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass. It is a scene where divine righteousness is seen to the infinite glory of God. The city has only **one** street—there will be no systems, sects, divisions, and subdivisions there. The prayer of our Lord,

" That they all may be one " (John xvii. 21),

will yet be gloriously answered. The joyful contemplation of this would go far to produce a yearning of heart now by God's Spirit for the unity of God's people, and that nothing in our spirit and ways should help on the confusion and weakness of the present. Thank God, He will triumph over all the sectarian spirit to natural to the human heart, and give us all to enter practically, and for ever, into His thoughts for His Church.

There is no temple seen therein. The earthly Bride will have her earthly city, Jerusalem, and her earthly temple. But in the heavenly city the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof.

The vail of the temple was rent in twain at the cross. No vail is on the hearts of God's people, nor on the face of Christ.

In the Holy City, all God's glory is free to shine in unhindered splendour ; there is no intermediate condition of things, no medium for its shining. It shines direct upon the hearts of the saints. It speaks of all God's nature being glorified, and everything in that Holy City being in accord with God. The love of God is at last complacent in that wondrous scene.

Thus the glowing narrative goes on to amplify this thought by telling us that there is in that city no need of created lights—sun or moon—the glory of God lightens that scene, and the Lamb is the light thereof. God's glory shines in Christ.

The saved nations walk in the light of it, and kings bring their honour and glory unto it. What a day that will be when heavenly light shall really govern the affairs of this world.

But it cannot be over-emphasized that it is not the light **of** the Church, but light **through** the Church. Then without limitation of any sort the Church will receive the light of God and the Lamb, and be the medium for its shining to the world. It is not the Church shining in her

own light, for she has none in herself, but the Church shining forth the light of Christ.

Every bit of pretension as to the Church shining, the Church teaching, that the Church is the source of blessing to the world, is utterly false. But can anything be more blessed than that the Church, the pearl of great price, inexpressibly dear to Christ, should receive fully the light of the glory of God so as to make her the blessed medium for the illuminating of the nations?

The gates of the city are never shut—there is no night there. Nothing that defiles that scene can ever enter. What a blissful picture of the triumph of God's thoughts for His Church.

Chapter XXII.

Still the description of the Holy City is unfolded to us. A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb. The tree of life grows on its banks, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree being for the healing of the nations.

Ezekiel xlvii. speaks of the water flowing from under the threshold of the temple eastward, parting into two streams, carrying on its bank all manner of trees for food, their fruit being for meat, and their leaves for medicine. How like it is to God that there should be a heavenly stream and an earthly stream of Millennial blessing.

But in the case of Rev. xxii. it is the water of life, and the tree of life, both speaking of Christ Himself. We are told what the leaves are for, even for the healing of the nations, but we are not told what the fruit is for in so many words, but surely the inference is plain that the fruit, the highest expression of life in a tree, is for the heavenly saints.

There shall be no more curse. This proves again that this must be the heavenly Bride, for Israel, the earthly

Bride, will come into her last great woe when the will of man at the close of the Millennium under the devil's leadership shall raise its head in its last impious uprising. But in the heavenly city there shall be no more curse.

So the blissful description runs on, not now a question of the nations, but of the heavenly city itself. They need no candle nor light of the sun, neither artificial nor created light: neither light by night as the candle, for there shall be no night there ; nor light by day as of the glorious sun, for there will be then a light beyond that of the glory of the greatest created luminary, even the light of the Lord God which He bestows upon them.

We are finally told that they shall reign for ever and ever.

Thus closes the symbolic description of the Church in administration in the Millennium. It fills our heart with a heavenly transport as we read it. Its glowing description sounds as a joyful paean, a song of holy triumph.

. . . . .

The rest of the chapter takes us back into the time and condition of the Philadelphian assembly. Verse 6 reminds us of chap. i. 1.

. . . . .

" Behold, I come quickly," is the hope of the Church, whilst " the things that are " (chap. ii. and iii.) run their course. John falls in worship at the feet of the angel who showed him these wonderful things, but the angel bids him worship God. He is told not to seal the sayings of the prophecy he received, because the time for its fulfilment is near. A thousand years is with God as a day, and a day as a thousand years.

But in view of things coming to a head, how solemn is the statement,

> " He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

How solemn when the time has arrived when men shall be fixed in one condition or the other, whether for weal or woe.

The Lord comes quickly, and His reward is with Him to give to every man according as his work shall be—in the case of the believer this will be carried out at the judgment seat of Christ ; with the unbeliever by the judgments falling on the earth ; with the Jewish brethren of Matt. xxv., and those nations who have responded to the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, at the sessional judgment of the sheep and the goats, the goats representing those who refuse the message ; and for the wicked dead at the great white throne.

Again the Person of Christ is presented to us in an arresting way:

> " I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Finally and solemnly the two classes are placed before us—those who have washed their robes in order to have right to the Tree of Life, and those who are " without " because of their moral character, unfit for the inside place.

" Blessed are they that do His commandments " is generally admitted to be a wrong translation of verse 14, for it is against the whole tenor of Scripture that salvation is by **our** doing and works. " Blessed are they that wash their robes " (N.T.), is admitted to be the correct way of translating the verse, bringing before us the thought that only the precious blood of Christ suffices for cleansing, giving us right to the Tree of Life, and ability to enter the gates into the city.

Again the Lord presents Himself. It is not John testifying of Him, but He testifies of Himself, using John as His inspired pen.

These things are testified in the churches; we are clearly back to Rev. ii. and iii. as we said. Christ is the Root and Offspring of David. As David's Root, David sprang from Him ; as David's Offspring Christ sprang (as per-

taining to the flesh) from David. The Church is not indifferent to Christ's Messianic claims, nor to the glory of His Person. No one could be David's Root but Deity; none could be David's Offspring but a Man. How the glory of His person is here presented.

Moreover, He is the Bright Morning Star. The Old Testament closes with the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings, that is, Christ in Millennial glory of His Person is here presented.
earth.

The New Testament ends with Christ, the Bright Morning Star, that is the Hope of the Church. Just as the bright morning star is seen before the sun arises, so the Church will see her Lord before Israel will see her Messiah. This title—the Bright Morning Star—refers to His coming **for** His saints, before He comes **with** His saints as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings to reign in righteousness over this earth.

No wonder that with such a presentation of Christ the Spirit and the Church say, Come.

And the heart of God goes out in a last yearning appeal in inviting any, who hear, to say, Come, and any who are athirst to drink of the water of life freely. How good it is for us to keep alive in our hearts to the very end a desire for the blessing of others.

A solemn warning is given as to adding to or subtracting from the sayings of the Book, evidently emphasizing the deep importance of these communications.

Finally the Lord testifies to His own, as if loth to leave the subject,

"Surely I come quickly, Amen."

How sweetly solemn is the addition of that "Amen." There is no mistake about it. The response from the heart of the Church comes at once,

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Meanwhile, be the time short or long, circumstances easy or difficult—and surely they will be difficult—"The

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" is sufficient for each fainting heart.

Surely the coming of the Lord draws very nigh. An earnest spirit of expectation is upon the hearts of His people.

Events in the world, happening with bewildering rapidity, proclaim the fact that the events narrated in this Book from chapter iv. are soon to begin.

How happy it is that before that time arrives Christ will come for His Church. "A little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37). How sweet and happy is our prospect.

"EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

As far as possible a perpendicular line marks the chronology of the Book—the line being broken to show where parenthetic matter is introduced.

• • • • •

Whenever practicable the line is given in regard to happenings ON THE EARTH.

• • • • •

CHAPTER I.

vv. 1—3 Introduction.
vv. 4—8 Salutations to the Seven Churches which are in Asia.
vv. 9—11 The Apostle John tells how he was commissioned to write, and to whom.
vv. 12—18 John describes what he saw—the first of the three great sections of the Book.
v. 19 THREEFOLD DIVINE DIVISION OF THE BOOK.
v. 20 Explanation of the seven stars and seven candlesticks.

CHAPTERS II. AND III.

These constitute the second division of the Book—"The things that are."

Chapter ii.

vv. 1—7 Address to the angel of the church in EPHESUS.
vv. 8—11 Address to the angel of the church in SMYRNA.
vv. 12—17 Address to the angel of the church in PERGAMOS.
vv. 18—29 Address to the angel of the church in THYATIRA.

Chapter iii.

vv. 1—6 Address to the angel of the church in SARDIS.
vv. 7—13 Address to the angel of the church in PHILADELPHIA.
vv. 14—22 Address to the angel of the church in LAODICEA.

Close of "The Things that are."

Coming of the Lord for His own, and the spueing out of His mouth the false profession.

CHAPTER IV.

Beginning of the third great division of the Book—"Things which must be hereafter," that is, after the Church is raptured to heaven.

v. 1 John called up to heaven—type of Church's translation.

vv. 2, 3 John sees (1) the throne; (2) its glorious Occupant; (3) the four and twenty elders; (4) the seven lamps, symbolical of the Holy Spirit; (5) the sea of glass, symbolical of fixed purity; (6) the four living creatures, symbolical of God's attributes.

vv. 9—11 Ascription of praise by the four living creatures, and worship of the four and twenty elders.

CHAPTER V.

vv. 1—7 The Book of Seven Seals—God's providential judgments upon the earth—seen in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne, and opened by the Lamb as it had been slain.

vv. 9—14 Ascription of praise by angels, the four living creatures, and the elders. Response made by every creature in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, and such as are in the sea. The four living creatures say "Amen," and the four and twenty elders worship.

CHAPTER VI.

vv. 1, 2	1st Seal	opened.
vv. 3, 4	2nd Seal	opened.
vv. 5, 6	3rd Seal	opened.
vv. 7, 8	4th Seal	opened.
vv. 9—11	5th Seal	opened.
vv. 12—17	6th Seal	opened.

CHAPTER VII.

Parenthetic.

vv. 1—8 144,000 of Israel sealed for preservation—probably a symbolical number.

vv. 9—17 The great Gentile multitude, who have been preserved through the tribulation that will sweep over the earth, leading up to the time when Christ shall establish His Millennial Kingdom.

CHAPTER VIII.

v. 1	7th Seal		opened (releasing and ushering in the Seven Trumpet judgments).
v. 2	The Seven Angels seen with Seven Trumpets.		
vv. 3, 4	Imprecatory prayers of the earthly saints about to be answered.		
v. 5	Symbolical action of the Angel casting the censer filled with fire from the altar to the earth, and its result.		
v. 6	Seven angels prepare to sound.		
v. 7	1st Trumpet		sounds.
vv. 8, 9	2nd Trumpet		sounds.
vv. 10, 11	3rd Trumpet		sounds.
v. 12	4th Trumpet		sounds.
	Angel cries of the three closing		"Woe, woe, woe," because trumpets about to sound.

CHAPTER IX.

vv. 1—12	5th Trumpet (First		sounds. Woe.)
vv. 13—21	6th Trumpet (Second		sounds. Woe.)

CHAPTER X.

vv. 1 6 Mighty angel with little book in his hand.
Seven thunders utter their voices.
John bidden to seal up those things uttered by the seven thunders.

Angel declares there shall be no more delay, and that the mystery of God should be finished in the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet.

vv. 8—11 The little book taken and eaten by John.

CHAPTER XI.

vv. 1, 2 Temple, altar, and worshippers measured. Holy City to be trodden down 3½ years, that is, during "the great tribulation."

vv. 3—12 Two witnesses, symbolical of a representative remnant standing for God, and martyred during the great tribulation, that is, during the second half of Daniel's 70th week.

vv. 13, 14	6th Trumpet (Second	finished. Woe.)
vv. 15—17	7th Trumpet (Third	sounds. Woe.)
	The end of all	things in judgment has arrived.
	"The Kingdom of come, and He (N.T.)	our Lord and of His Christ is shall reign to the ages of ages"
	The four and thanks.	twenty elders worship and give
	The nations	are angry.
	The time of the this is the	dead to be judged is come: great white throne judgment
	The time of is come.	rewards for prophets and saints
	The time for is come.	the destroyers to be destroyed
	This verse is to the end ological order. order.	a rapid summing up of things without respect to strict chron- They are rather stated in moral
	THE IMPORT PARTICU-	OF VERSE 18 SHOULD BE LARLY GRASPED.
	The temple of	God opened.
	Ark of Testament tervene	seen, that is Christ about to in- personally.
	Conclusion of thunderings,	third woe in lightnings, voices, earthquake, great hail.

FINISH OF JUDGMENTS.

CHAPTER XII.

Parenthetic.

vv. 1—17 A history of the Jewish nation from the birth of Christ up to the great tribulation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Parenthetic.

vv. 1—10 A history of the Gentile power in connection with the Roman Empire. Rise of the first beast, the political and military head of the Fourth Empire.

vv. 11—18 Rise of the second beast, the false prophet (Antichrist).

CHAPTER XIV.

Parenthetic.

vv. 1—5 The Jewish Remnant (144,000, probably a symbolical number) martyred during the tribulation.

vv. 6, 7 An angel proclaims the everlasting Gospel.

v. 8 An angel proclaims the fall of Babylon.

vv. 9—11 A third angel announces the doom of the followers of the beast.

vv. 11—13 The happiness of the faithful and the blessedness of those who should die in the Lord henceforth announced.

vv. 14—16 THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH. Matt. xiii. gives result.

vv. 17—20 THE VINTAGE OF THE EARTH. Finishes up with Armageddon and Zech. xiv.

CHAPTER XV.

v. 1 Seven angels with seven last plagues introduced. These are more or less contemporaneous with the seven trumpets, the seventh in each case occuring simultaneously, bringing God's judgment to an end prior to introducing the Millennium, according to Zech. xiv.

vv. 2—4 The Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb.

vv. 5, 6 The angels prepare to pour out the seven last plagues. One of the living creatures hands to each of the angels a golden vial full of the wrath of God.

v. 8 The temple filled with glory. None able to enter till the plagues of the seven angels should be fulfilled.

* * * * *

For the sake of clearness we reproduce the chronological line, setting forth the order of the seven trumpets, and set alongside what we believe to be approximately the order of the seven vials in relation to the seven trumpets.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XVI.

Seven Trumpets.			Seven Vials.		
Ch. viii. 1	1st	Trumpet			
Ch. viii. 8, 9	2nd	do.	Ch. xvi. 2	1st	Vial
Ch. viii. 10, 11	3rd	do.	Ch. xvi. 3	2nd	do.
Ch. viii. 12	4th	do.	Ch. xvi. 4-7	3rd	do.
			Ch. xvi. 8-9	4th	do.
Ch. ix. 1—12	5th	do. (1st Woe)	Ch. xvi. 10, 11	5th	do.
Ch. ix. 13—21	6th	do. (2nd Woe)	,, 12-16	6th	do.
Ch. xi. 3—14					
Ch. xi. 15—19 **Including up to the in verse 18.**	7th	do. (3rd Woe) **rapid summary end of all things**	,, 17-21	7th	do.

FINISH OF JUDGMENTS*

CHAPTER XVII.

Parenthetic.

Babylon, that great ecclesiastical system of corruption, the Roman Catholic Church, described.

CHAPTER XVIII.

This gives us the **details** of the fall of Babylon as announced in previous chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

vv. 1—6 Great rejoicing over the fall and destruction of the false Bride—Babylon—making room for the introduction of the true Bride.

vv. 7, 8 Announcement of the true Bride. This is the first mention of THE Church as such in the Book. Rev. ii, and iii, speak of churches—local assemblies typical of the **professing** Church in a sevenfold way. Here it is THE Church.

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*Seeing, as we have, that the seventh trumpet and seventh vial coincide in time, the expression—**finish of judgments**—is applicable to both events.

vv. 11—21 Detailed account of the great battle of Armageddon, occuring as the finish of the seventh trumpet and seventh vial.

CHAPTER XX.

vv. 1—3	Satan bound in	abyss for 1000 years.
v. 4	Millennial reign	of Christ during same period.
vv. 5, 6	Two resurrections contrasted.	
v. 7	Satan released	from abyss at the close of the Millennium.
v. 8	Satan gathers the	nations in last final rising against God.
v. 9	Last siege	of Jerusalem.
	God's inter-	vention complete and final.
	God's enemies	destroyed.
	The devil	cast into the lake of fire.
	The resurrection	of the wicked dead.
v. 11	The heavens and	the earth flee away from the face of Him who	sits upon the throne.

THE ETERNAL STATE.

(Time no longer.)

vv. 12—15 The great white throne judgment.

CHAPTER XXI.

vv. 1—7 Description of a new heaven and a new earth, and the bliss of those who shall dwell there.

v. 8 Description of the everlasting doom of the wicked dead.

. . . . .

CHAPTER XXI. vv. 9—27 / CHAPTER XXII. vv. 1—5 — **Parenthetic.** Gives us detailed description of the Church in her relation to the earth during the Millennium.

v. 6 John tells us that these sayings are faithful and true, that is, all that has been unfolded in the Book.

vv. 7—21 These verses carry us back to the time of "the things that are." The Lord thrice announces His coming, testifying,

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY."

BRIEF EXPOSITION OF DANIEL.

DANIEL is the great prophetical book of the Old Testament as Revelation is of the new Testament. The one is complementary to the other, especially in their delineations of the Roman Empire.

Daniel was a singularly beautiful character. A captive at the court of Babylon, of royal or noble birth (chap. i. 3), he began to stand for God in his youthful days, and witnessed for the truth till the reign of King Cyrus, a period covering about seventy years.

He knew what it was to live in the fierce light that falls upon those in highest positions, as well as to be in the shade of obscurity for years. Yet whenever called upon he answered for God.

To him were given wonderful visions full of the deepest importance and enlightenment as to the last days. Without Daniel, Revelation would be to a large extent a sealed book.

The prophet was contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Divisions of the Book:—

1. **Chapter I.**—Introductory.

2. **Chapters II. 1 to IV. 37.**—Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and their interpretations.

3. **Chapters V. to VI. 28.**—Daniel's history under Belshazzar and Darius.

4. **Chapters VII. 1 to XII. 13.**—Daniel's visions and their interpretations.

These divisions are well marked, and easily apprehended. Dr. C. I. Scofield writes:—

> "From Dan. ii. 4 to vii. 28 the Book of Daniel is written in Aramaic, the ancient language of Syria, and substantially identical with Chaldaic, the language of ancient Babylonia. Upon this fact, together

with the occurrence of fifteen Persian and three Greek words, has been based an argument against the historicity of Daniel, and in favour of a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander (B.C. 332). It has, however, seemed, with some modern exceptions, to the Hebrew and Christian scholarship of the ages an unanswerable proof rather of the Danielic authorship of the book, that living from boyhood in a land the language of which was Chaldaic, a great part of his writing should be in that tongue. It has been often pointed out that the Chaldaic of Daniel is of high antiquity, as is shown by comparison with that of the Targums. The few words of Persian and Greek in like manner confirm the writer's residence at a court constantly visited by emissaries from those peoples. It is noteworthy that the Aramaic section is precisely that part of Daniel which most concerned the peoples amongst whom he lived, and to whom a prophecy written in Hebrew would have been unintelligible. The language returns to Hebrew in the predictive portions which have to do with the future of Israel."

The prophetical part of this Book coming particularly within the scope of our present inquiry, we will content ourselves with very slender reference to the historical parts.

Chapter I.

This chapter gives us an incident that brings out the guiding principle of Daniel's character, even purpose of heart in standing for God in every detail of life.

Chapter II.

This chapter gives us the keynote of Daniel's prophecy, that is, "The Times of the Gentiles." It is the Lord Himself, in Luke xxi. 24, who uses this significant expression. These times began with the transference of God's centre of government from the Jew to the Gentile. The cause of this was the idolatry of the Jews, leading first to the break up of the twelve tribes into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and subsequently to Israel being deported to Assyria, and Judah to Babylonia. We shall see in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image a visualized portraiture of "The Times of the Gentiles."

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, had a dream, the remembrance of which passed from him. With the despotism that marked these eastern potentates, he called upon the Chaldean astrologers to relate to him the forgotten dream, clearly an impossible thing to ask.

The Chaldeans were unable to comply with the King's request, telling him that only supernatural power could suffice for that purpose. Thereupon the King was furious, and commanded that the wise men of Babylon should be slain, including among their number Daniel and his friends.

Daniel goes in to the infuriated monarch, and asks him to give him time, and he will show him the interpretation.

Consider Daniel's faith in God. There is no hint of possible failure. He promised the interpretation.

The first thing Daniel does is to call his three companions to prayer. He was dependent, and God honoured his faith. During his sleep God revealed the vision to His servant. In coming before the King, Daniel ascribes all the glory of the revelation to God.

The vision was briefly this: A great image, whose form was terrible. The head was of fine gold ; the breast and arms were of silver ; the belly and thighs were of brass ; the legs of iron ; the feet part of iron and part of clay. The King looked in his dream till a stone cut out without hands smote the image upon its feet, and broke them to pieces. The image was thus fallen, and in its fall the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces, so much so as to be likened to chaff on the summer threshing-floor, carried away by the wind. The stone that thus smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel gives the interpretation—a most remarkable proof of the inspiration of Scripture. Whatever date is assigned by critics to the Book of Daniel, nothing can rob this interpretation of its wonderful and minute prophecy.

Prophecy on the page of Scripture, fulfilled as the centuries slowly unroll the page of history, is such a proof of inspiration that only the wickedness and blindness of the unregenerate heart can deny.

Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is one of the most astounding and remarkable instances of this. The interpretation covers "the Times of the Gentiles"—delineates the rise and fall of four great world-empires, the coming and going of which are completely outside the region of the shrewdest guess. Nothing but God's omniscience in foretelling, and His omnipotence in controlling the affairs of the world, suffice to explain the interpretation of this wonderful dream. The interpretation was this:—

Head of Gold symbolized the Babylonian Empire.

Breast and Arms of Silver symbolized the Medo-Persian Empire.

Belly and Thighs of Brass symbolized the Grecian Empire.

Legs of Iron, Feet part Iron and part Clay, symbolized the Roman Empire.

Note the deterioration in the materials used—gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay. There is no diminution of **force**, save in the clay, for iron is tougher as a metal than gold, but there is a diminution of **glory** indicated in this way.

Doubtless Nebuchadnezzar is pointed out by Daniel as the head of gold, because he received his position direct from God.

> "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (chap. ii. 37).

With this gift of absolute power, as men say, God helped Nebuchadnezzar providentially to the securing of

it. For proof of this read Jer. xxvii. 1—8, a very remarkable passage.

In the case of the second Kingdom, the fact that it was a dual kingdom—the Medo-Persian—affords evidence of deterioration. We need go no further than the Book of Daniel for proof of this. Witness the impotence of Darius when he wished to deliver Daniel from the doom his nobles had planned for him.

The third Empire—the Grecian—on the death of Alexander the Great, was divided by his four generals, a still further deterioration.

The Roman Empire, the fourth Empire, is much more dwelt upon in the prophecy, because in its revived form it goes on to the end. The iron speaks, we believe, of the immense military power of that empire, the clay of the democratic element, which has developed under our eyes in such a striking way, and which marked it in its early days, for the soldiers of Rome chose their Emperor, and it likewise existed as a Republic.

The Roman Empire as it originally existed was broken up by the Huns and Goths in the fifth century, but Rev. xiii. 1—8 foretells its revival. It was broken up, doubtless, to give time for the calling out by God of a people from among the nations to form the Church. But once the Church is raptured to heaven, the Roman Empire will revive again—its deadly wound shall be healed. Already there are many and ominous signs of its revival.

Without going minutely into details, Nebuchadnezzar is inflated by this dream. God gave him a vision of this composite image, the **head** of gold being designated as himself. In his folly he would make a **whole** image of gold, and call men on pain of death to worship it.

A tiny weak handful of Jewish captives—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—resisted this idolatrous command and were cast into the fiery furnace, heated seven times by the order of the infuriated monarch. The stoutest men of the empire, who threw the faithful witnesses

into the fire, were themselves slain by the fury of the flame, whilst only their victims' bonds were burnt, their clothes and hair being untouched.

And as they walked in the midst of the furnace a fourth form appeared, even like that of the Son of God. The King, astonished, commanded the three Hebrew witnesses to come out of the fire, whilst he acknowledged the power of God in delivering His servants, and commanded that none should speak amiss of their God under pain of death, and promoted the erstwhile martyrs to be rulers in the provinces of Babylon.

We believe Nebuchadnezzar's making of the golden image to be a picture of the last Roman Emperor, who will at the instigation of the false prophet allow an image to be made of himself for the purpose of being worshipped, whilst the three Hebrew children cast into the fiery furnace affords a picture of the Jewish remnant that will refuse to worship the image and will go through the "great tribulation" and have to endure intense suffering as the consequence.

In chapter iv. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. He tells it to the soothsayers, who are unable to interpret it. Daniel is sent for. The King narrates his dream.

In it he saw a tree, great and strong and high, reaching up to heaven. Its leaves were fair, its fruit much, and it bore meat for all. The beasts of the field found shadow under it, and the fowls of the air lodged in its branches, and all flesh was fed by it.

A watcher and a holy one from heaven came down and called aloud that the tree and its branches should be hewn down, its leaves shaken off, and its fruit scattered, the beasts, rejoicing in its shadow, dispersed, and the fowls removed from its shelter. Nevertheless its stump was to be left in the earth, but bound with a band of iron and brass.

At this point the "tree" symbol is dropped, and the figure is changed to a man. Evidently the tree is sym-

bolical of the greatness and widespreading power of the man introduced into the dream. He is to be wet with the dew of heaven, and eat grass with the beasts of the field. His heart is to be changed to a beast's, and a period of seven times is to pass over him.

This is said by the watcher and holy one to be the decree of the watchers and holy ones that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

Daniel is now asked by the King for the interpretation of his dream. The prophet is amazed beyond measure, and is silent for one hour. Encouraged by the King he gives him the interpretation. He tells the monarch that the great tree symbolizes himself (Nebuchadnezzar) in all his greatness and widespread dominion. In its being cut down he was to behold his own doom. The idolatrous golden image was an affront to God that could not be passed over. The tree stump with its roots, bound with iron and brass, spoke of the kingdom being secured to him whilst driven from men and his dwelling being with the beasts of the field.

Daniel earnestly begs the King to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Such a course of repentance might lengthen his tranquility, but Daniel holds out no hope of the judgment being altogether averted.

Twelve months roll by. The King walks in his palace. He is lifted up with pride, saying, " Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? " Instead of acknowledging that God had put him into his position he ascribed all the glory to himself.

At that moment the blow fell. His reason forsook him. Men drove the erstwhile mighty monarch into the fields. He ate grass like an ox, his body was wet with

the dew of heaven, his hairs grew like eagle's feathers, and his nails like eagle's claws.

At the end of the seven times his reason returned to him ; and he praised God, saying:—

> "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (chap. iv. 37).

In the doom of this idolatrous monarch, see a picture of the doom of the revived head of the Roman Empire. In giving up God men become like beasts. But whilst God graciously restores Nebuchadnezzar, doom full and final will overtake the impious head of the revived Roman Empire and his lieutenant, the false prophet.

The doom of the Babylonian Empire was finally carried out in the reign of Belshazzar. Chapter v. is the only chapter in the book devoted to Belshazzar's history. It describes the great feast given to a thousand of his lords, how he impiously commanded the sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple at Jerusalem, to be brought in, and used, as they praised the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. At that moment a mysterious man's hand appeared on the plaster wall of the King's palace, and wrote the startling words: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."

Affrighted, the King called for the astrologers, offering great rewards—scarlet clothing, a chain of gold, and the third place in the kingdom—to any person interpreting the fateful handwriting. None of the astrologers could gain the rewards.

That the King offered the **third** place in the kingdom as reward is a bit of circumstantial evidence so dear to the lawyer's heart, and so convincing in a court of justice. Belshazzar reigned with his father (Nabonidus). The associate monarch is not named in Daniel v. It is believed he was away on military business at the time. **Two** places belonged to these two kings, hence the promised reward of a **third** place in the kingdom.

When the astrologers failed to interpret the writing to the King, the queen-mother told him of Daniel, and that he had the wisdom of the gods.

The prophet was brought from his obscurity, for evidently the King had not even heard of him, and was offered the glittering rewards. They were worth nothing, as the sequel showed.

Daniel reminded Belshazzar of the fate of his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar, how his heart was lifted up with pride, how he lost his reason, how his heart was made like the beasts', and how he lived like the cattle in the field.

Then the solemn, withering indictment followed:—

> "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, **though thou knewest all this;** but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven."

God had noted the idolatrous feast which would even make sport of the holy vessels of the temple. So Daniel continued his terrible indictment. Each word must have fallen like a crushing blow on the heart of the intoxicated monarch.

MENE: **God hath numbered thy Kingdom, and finished it.**

TEKEL: **Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.**

PERES: **Thy Kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.**

Profane history tells us how Darius diverted the river Euphrates, and, as Daniel's last words sounded in the monarch's frightened ear, he was even then at the gate. His troops entered the city through the dry bed of the river.

In the brief pregnant words of Scripture:—

> "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the

Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."

Chapter vi. gives us the personal history of Daniel in the reign of Darius. It is noteworthy how God honoured His faithful servant, and amid the change of kings and dynasties and the cataclysm of fate he was ever ready to serve the Lord.

The chief incident in the chapter is the well-known one of Daniel and the lion's den. The position of Darius, as tied by his nobles, contrasts with the complete autocracy of the Babylonian Empire, and fulfils the dream of Nebuchadnezzar when he saw the head to be of **gold,** the breast and arms of **silver.**

Doubtless these two incidents of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, and Daniel in the lion's den, will be very encouraging to the faithful remnant in the midst of the great tribulation, even as they would seem to be typical of that time.

The rest of the book, and the most important for us, is taken up with the description of Daniel's visions and the interpretations thereof as they occurred in the reigns of Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus.

Chapter VII.

This chapter gives us Daniel's vision of the four beasts coming up out of the great sea. "The great sea" is the name given to the Mediterranean, that sea entirely surrounded by countries composing the prophetical earth. Four beasts arising out of the sea answer to the four parts of the composite image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The difference between the monarch's vision and Daniel's is this: Nebuchadnezzar had unfolded to him the **outward** course of the great world-empires, whereas Daniel had their **inward** disposition revealed to him. We will just state them, and then give a few details.

1. **Lion, symbolical of Babylonian Empire.**

2. **Bear, symbolical of Medo-Persian Empire.**
3. **Leopard, symbolical of Grecian Empire.**
4. **Fourth Beast, symbolical of Roman Empire.**

Notice the deterioration in the beasts, not as to strength but as to character, just as there was in the metals of which the great image was formed.

Note, too, the four beasts are not said to come out of the sea all together, but they follow one after another in the vision of Daniel.

1. **Lion.**—A lion with eagle's wings, the wings eventually plucked, the beast lifted off the earth and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart given to it,—such is the description of the first beast.

The lion speaks of majesty and strength, the eagle's wings of rapidity of movement and conquest. In God's ways the time for enlargement of empire would cease, and in its place a peaceful phase would be entered upon, characterized by feeling and intelligence, such as standing on feet as a man, and a man's heart being given to it. This all answers to the Babylonian Empire.

We have seen how suddenly and tragically it terminated even in the presence of Daniel as he foretold so fearlessly its immediate doom.

2. **Bear.**—The bear raised itself on one side, it had three ribs in its mouth, and it was bidden to devour much flesh. Raised on one side more than the other refers to the **dual** monarchy—the Medo-Persian, and how one was the predominant power. The bear is a powerful creature, but lacks the speed and power of the lion. Evidently the empire grew by aggression, which failed to lead to assimilation.

3. **Leopard.**—Rapidity of conquest rather than the consolidation of its rule marked the Grecian Empire, thus symbolized. It had four wings of a fowl, bespeaking rapidity in flight as the leopard is rapid among beasts,

but lacking the dignity and power of the eagle's flight, characterizing the first Empire.

It had four heads, evidently referring to the four generals who divided the Grecian Empire among them on the death of Alexander the Great.

4. **Fourth Beast, Great and Terrible.**—It was exceeding strong, had iron teeth, and it devoured and broke in pieces, it stamped upon the residue with its feet ; that is to say, it subjugated the territories of previous empires, absorbing them into its own, not in their full extent, but in their most important parts, and it had ten horns. Here we have the description of the Roman Empire.

It is noticeable how part answers to part in Scripture. The fourth part of the great image, viz., the legs and feet of iron, the latter mingled with clay, and the fourth beast come in for the fullest and most detailed notice. This is quite understandable. One world-empire gives place to another only to lead up to the final phase, viz., the Roman Empire.

In the interpretation of the vision of the great image one sentence suffices for the Babylonian Empire—" Thou art this head of gold " (chap. ii. 38), and one verse suffices for the Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires, whereas four verses are needed to describe the fourth Empire.

Similarly in chapter vii. one verse is given to the Babylonian Empire, one to the Medo-Persian, one to the Grecian, whilst two verses are given to the Roman Empire.

When Daniel would know the interpretation of the vision, the explanation of the four beasts is given in one verse (17), but nine verses are necessary for the description of the fourth beast and its doom.

The similarity between the vision of the great image and that of the four beasts is striking.

In the New Testament, seeing the three world-empires had passed away when John wrote the Revelation, and remembering that the New Testament Scriptures were written when the fourth Empire was in existence, we

should expect that only the fourth Empire would be mentioned.

In Rev. xiii., when John describes the Roman Empire, like Daniel he sees it in the form of a beast coming up out of the sea. It had a body like a leopard (reminiscent of the Grecian Empire), feet like a bear's (reminiscent of the Medo-Persian Empire), mouth like a lion's (reminiscent of the Babylonian Empire). Like Daniel's beast it has ten horns.

In Rev. xiii. we have the New Testament presentation of Daniel's description of the Roman Empire.

Indeed, Daniel and Revelation are so complementary to each other in regard to the Roman Empire, and the tribulation of the Jews, that the true understanding of the one helps to the true understanding of the other.

One verse in Dan. vii. needs a note of explanation.

> "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time" (verse 12).

That means that those empires passed away as empires, but were not destroyed as peoples, but lived on in connection with the world-empire then in existence, whereas the Roman Empire will be literally, and for ever, destroyed when Christ comes to reign over the earth.

In the great image vision this is seen in the stone, cut out without hands, destroying the image; in the four beasts vision it is seen in the Ancient of Days destroying the beast and giving his body to the burning flame.

The description of the Ancient of Days is in measure like that of the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The Son of Man is brought near to Him, and given an everlasting dominion. As Ancient of Days, judgment is committed to His hands; as Son of Man He receives His kingdom. It appears to us that these are both presentations of the same Person—the Lord Jesus Christ—looked at in different connections.

In the long explanation of the fourth beast that is given

we read of a little horn plucking up three of the ten horns by the roots. Rev. xiii. puts the same fact before us in a different way. It speaks of seven heads and ten horns and ten crowns on the ten horns. That means that each of the seven heads had its crown, but **one** of the heads, putting Daniel and Revelation together, must have answered for **three** horns with their **three** crowns. This answers to the little horn of Daniel vii. 8.

It is not without significance that the great red dragon, Satan, has seven heads and ten horns with seven crowns upon his heads, thus showing whence the Roman Empire will derive its power.

Daniel vii. is very explicit in its interpretation. The ten horns are ten kings. Another king shall arise after them, different from the rest, and he shall subdue three kings, that is, pluck up three horns by the roots. The character of this great potentate is given us.

The head of the revived Roman Empire is to be blasphemous against God, he is to be the persecutor of God's earthly people, he will change the times and laws, and God's earthly people will be in his hand for a time and times and the dividing of time, that is, for three and a half years, during the time that is known as the "great tribulation" (Matt. xxiv. 21)—"the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7).

The Ancient of Days, even their Messiah, will deliver His earthly people, judgment will be set, and the Kingdom and dominion over the whole earth will be given to the saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him, that is, during the Millennial reign of Christ.

Chapter VIII.

Two years after the vision in chapter vii. Daniel was given another vision, filling in details not given formerly.

The prophet sees in vision a ram having two horns, one higher than the other, and the higher coming up last.

The interpretation is given in verse 20,

> "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the Kings of Media and Persia."

The monarchy was dual, and the Persian element coming in later than the Median, became the more prominent, thus illustrating the correctness of Daniel's vision in its details.

The Medo-Persian Kingdom was greater in extent than the Babylonian, extending westward and northward and southward. But it was in its attempt to travel westward that it brought about its own destruction, and the fulfilment of Scripture.

An he goat, in Daniel's vision, appeared, having a notable horn between his eyes, coming from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touching not the ground.

Verse 21 of our chapter tells us this rough goat symbilizes the King of Greece, and the notable horn, Alexander the Great. Coming from the west describes the first contest of Europe with Asia for world power.

Suddenly this wonderful conqueror came upon the scene, touching not the ground, the wonderful rapidity of his conquests being thus graphically described.

The he goat came close to the ram, brake his two horns, cast him to the ground, and stamped upon him. In other words, Greece, led by Alexander the Great, smashed up the world-empire of the Medes and Persians, that is, the breast and arms of silver are succeeded by the belly and thighs of brass.

Then we read of the he goat waxing very great, and when strong the great horn was broken. Alexander died in his early thirties at the zenith of his power and success.

The notable horn being broken, in their place four horns sprang up towards the four winds of heaven. At Alexander's death the Grecian Empire was divided among his four generals. How exact and accurate Scripture is. The foreknowledge of events requiring centuries for their ful-

filment is an absolutely irrefutable proof of divine inspiration. Out of one of these four horns came forth a little horn,* of whom many details are given. He waxed exceeding great, toward the south and east and toward the pleasant land, that is, Palestine. He cast down some of the host of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

The host and stars evidently refer to the governing dignitaries and classes among the Jews, those who outwardly proposed allegiance to God and the Jewish system of worship. We read further that he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away. The whole outlook at this point is Jewish. This little horn refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, who illtreated the Jew, overrunning the pleasant land, and subjecting God's ancient people to indignity and persecution. The prince of the host is evidently Jehovah, who is to appear as the Prince of Israel.

" It," referring to the little horn, is changed to " he " in verse 11, alluding in both cases to the same person, Antiochus Epiphanes. He takes away the daily sacrifice from the temple, and is allowed to do so as the scourge of God because of the transgression of the people.

It is well known that this king cherished very bitter feelings against the Jew, that he attempted to force heathen worship upon them. He went so far as to put to death those Jews who resisted his attempts to subvert their religion.

In the end he was defeated, and set on one side by the united efforts of the Romans and the Maccabees. This doubtless is the meaning of the sanctuary being trodden down 2300 days, a period of a little less than six and a

* " The little horn " of chap. viii. 9 should not be confounded with " another little horn " in chap. vii. 8. The former refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, whilst the latter refers to the head of the revived Roman Empire in the last days, and is yet to appear.

half years, when Antiochus Epiphanes, being defeated, the worship of the temple was restored.

Doubtless this king is typical of a greater prince, who shall arise in the last days from the same part as Antiochus Epiphanes did. He will be the revival of the King of the North, the open and avowed enemy of the Jew.

The Antichrist will be King in Jerusalem, the enemy of God **inside**; the Assyrian King of the North will be the avowed enemy of God's people **outside.**

It looks as if the results of the Great War may be leading up to the fulfilment of this. The Turk has been almost driven out of Europe, and we should judge from Scripture will be altogether. Palestine and Mesopotamia, together covering the **promised** land, have been cleared of the Turk. The Jew is returning to his own land in the fulfilment of Scripture. The Turk, driven out of Europe, Palestine, Arabia, and Mesopotamia, has set up his capital in Asia Minor. It looks as if we are within measurable distance of what may be the re-appearance of this terrible adversary, the King of the North, in the Turk.

Chapter viii. 23—27 foretells the arising of a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences. It is evident he will be a king who will arise from a part of the former Grecian Empire, as is evident from the expression,

> "In the latter time of their [**i.e., the four kingdoms carved out of the Grecian Empire as Alexander the Great left it at his death**] kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up" (verse 23).

Further, putting the expressions " in the latter time of their kingdom " and " when the transgressors are come to the full " together, and the fact that " he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand," that is, he shall come into con-

flict with the Lord Himself, proves that the king will arise in the last days, and that his end will take place at the very end of the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week.

Understanding dark sentences points to him posing as a religious though anti-Christian teacher. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. He will be powerful only because of his backing. He shall destroy wonderfully and prosper. His chief hatred and objective will be " the mighty and the holy people," that is, the Jews, whom he will persecute and destroy.

Not only will he practise the arts of war, but he will, also, be a great diplomatist. His peace tactics will be as dangerous as his war policy, and lead to much destruction.

His heart will be lifted up with pride, and he shall dare to stand against the Lord Himself, the Prince of princes.

His end is described with grim brevity. "But he shall be broken without hand," that is, by **divine** power. This vision carries us well into Revelation, right up to chapter xix.

Antiochus Epiphanes, described in verses 9—12, may well be typical of this king of fierce countenance. The former has long since passed off the scene, the latter is still to come. Will he be the King of the North ? We think so.

Chapter IX.

The first two verses are interesting. They show that when facts are already revealed by inspired writing, it is from that inspired writing the man of God will get the information revealed. Daniel, the vessel in an extraordinary way of inspired writing, did not despise, or neglect, that which was already given. So we find Daniel carefully studying Jeremiah's prophecy and gleaning the information that seventy years was the time determined

upon by God for the chastisement of His people in giving them to be captives in the hands of the Babylonians, and for the restoration to the land of her stolen sabbaths. As one sabbath stands in relation to a week of seven days, so seventy years stand in relation to four hundred and ninety years.

Daniel knew that this period was drawing to a close. Chapter x. begins with the third year of Cyrus ; the book of Ezra begins with the first year, and is taken up with the return of a small party of the Jews into their own land.

Daniel, knowing the time of governmental exile was running out, gave himself to prayer and confession. Why Daniel did not participate in the movement of return to Palestine we cannot say. God chose Ezra for that purpose ; Daniel's work apparently was in Babylon.

Daniel's confession is touching in the extreme. In it he owns the sin of his people as his own sin, even sins committed long before he was born. Since a youth he had been captive, though put at times in high office and standing in great favour. He had seen the Babylonian Empire crumble in a night. Now an old man, at the very end of his career, he shines never brighter than when on his knees in this chapter. He says so touchingly, "We do not present our supplications before Thee for **our** righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies " (verse 18), and pleads, " O Lord, according to all **Thy** righteousness . . .let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away " (verse 16).

As the result of his prayer Daniel becomes the recipient of a most remarkable communication. No sooner does Daniel begin his supplication than Gabriel is sent quickly to give him skill and understanding.

If seventy years were determined upon as the limit of God's governmental dealing with Israel in exile, Daniel is now informed as to how long it will take according to the divine way of reckoning to the end of God's dealing

with His people resulting in the personal reign of Christ in the Millennium.

And yet so much is packed in these verses, so much said, so much unsaid, that they need very careful examination to glean from them all that is contained therein. The most stupendous events are described in a line. We read:—

> "Seventy weeks[=periods of seven] are determined upon thy [Daniel's] people, and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (verse 24).

This clearly points to the introduction of the Millennium, when Christ shall sit as a Priest and a King upon His own throne, and reign as Messiah over His ancient people, and as Son of Man over the whole earth.

Seventy weeks or seventy sevens equals four hundred and ninety. We are familiar in Scripture symbols with the idea that a thing or a time stands for a year in fulfilment.

The seven well-favoured kine, and the seven rank and full ears of corn, stood for seven years in Pharaoh's dream. When Ezekiel was told to lie on his side three hundred and ninety days for the iniquity of Israel, and forty days for the iniquity of Judah, he was plainly told by God, "I have appointed thee each day for a year" (Ezek. iv. 6).

If this is the interpretation in the present case the test is too plain to admit of any mistake. If the interpretation is correct it will stand the test; if wrong it will break down.

A starting date and a finishing date are both given. The start is the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (about B.C. 445), the finish is the cutting off of the Messiah, of Christ. Sixty-nine weeks or periods

are said to be between these two events. Now sixty-nine weeks or periods of sevens equal four hundred and eighty three, and if the year for a day interpretation stands good they would stand for the same number of years.

The starting point is evidently given in Neh. ii., when Artaxerxes arranged for Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall. Others have written at length and in great detail as to these dates, notably Sir Robert Anderson in his well-known work, " The Coming Prince," but if we take the date at the top of our Bibles in Nehemiah, B.C. 445, and add to it the thirty-six and a half years* of our Lord's life, we get four hundred and eighty-one and a half years, which is near enough to the four hundred and eighty-three we require.

It looks as if the seven weeks, which together with the sixty-two make up the sixty-nine weeks, are reckoned as the period allowed for the troublous times in which the street and the wall were to be built.

It distinctly tells us that Messiah should be cut off, but " not for Himself "; that is, " should have nothing " (N.T.). How blind must the Jews be in reading the Old Testament Scripture not to see plainly that their Messiah was to be cut off ; and that event to take place at the end of sixty-nine sevens after the decree of Artaxerxes. If they had applied a year for each of the four hundred and eighty-three periods, they would have been happily guided in their search.

To the end of the time there remains but the seventieth week or period to be fulfilled ; in other words, a period made up of seven parts. We believe it to be seven years.

But nearly two thousand years have rolled by since Christ was crucified. What becomes then of the seven-

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*We have refrained from elaborate calculations. Many think our Lord's life began B.C. 4. Of this we are sure, that if the absolutely correct dates could be established beyond doubt they would exactly fulfil this striking prophecy.

tieth week ? This is only explainable by observing that in Old Testament prophecy the present Church period is reckoned as a **dies non** ; that is, as a period it is not reckoned at all in relation to Old Testament prophecy.

Old Testament prophecy has to do with the Jew, and, if it affects Gentile lands and times as well, it is as in relation to the Jew and God's ways in the world in government.

So we find chapter ix., verses 26 and 27, treat events as they affect the Jew. Verse 26 tells us of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. This took place A.D. 70.

The agents of this destruction are described as " the people of the prince that shall come "; that is, the Roman power.

It is not here stated that **" THE PRINCE of the people "** encompasses the destruction, but **" THE PEOPLE of the prince that shall come "**; that is, of the great Emperor of the revived Roman Empire.

In other words, **the prince** is yet to come, but the people out of whom the prince is to spring was to be the instrument in the destruction of Jerusalem. How exact is Scripture ! Surely verbal inspiration is amply proved.

Then, completely ignoring the Christian era as being out of range of this Scripture's purview, the history moves on from A.D. 70—the date of Jerusalem's destruction under Titus—to what is still future, " the end thereof."

Evidently "the prince that shall come" is looked upon as present in verse 27. We are told that he shall confirm the covenant with the many for one week or period composed of seven parts; that is, we believe, for seven years.

In the middle of the week, that is, at the end of three and a half years, he will treat his covenant as " a scrap of paper," break his plighted word, persecute the Jew, bring to an abrupt termination the worship of the Temple, and set up the overspreading abomination of desolation;

that is, we believe, his own image set up for worship. The Antichrist will give breath to the image and make it speak, and cause as many as will not worship the image to be killed.

The late Wm. Kelly gives a literal translation of the words, "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate," as follows: "for [on account of] the wing of abomination, a desolator."

A **wing** in scriptural symbol speaks of protection, and that protection in this case is of idolatry, and that of the most flagrant kind.

Hosea prophesies that "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (iii. 4); a remarkable passage showing what is literally true, that the Jews would be without a ruler of their own, without their true worship, and without idolatry.

This last is all the more remarkable as idolatry was Israel's great and constant snare.

But here in the last days under the leadership of the false prophet they will lapse into idolatry, and because of this idolatry God will bring upon them the desolator, probably the King of the North.

This will continue even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (desolator); that is, God will use the desolator as His scourge upon His idolatrous people until the end of the seventieth week, when the desolator himself shall meet with his doom at the hand of God.

So that until the Roman Empire is revived, and the head of it makes a treaty with the Jewish nation for seven years, we have no dates to go upon as to the future. We have often heard it said that between the Lord's coming for His heavenly people and appearing with them to reign

over His earthly people there will be a period of not less than three and a half years and not more than seven years. But this is not so. **The second coming of Christ for His heavenly saints fixes no date in reference to a closing one.**

It begins a period, the period of "the things that shall be hereafter," a time when God's judgments shall sweep the earth. Until the Jew is back in his own land, his Temple service in full swing, the Roman Empire revived, and its head making this seven years treaty, we have no event fixed in reference to a closing date. When that seven years begins, the enlightened will be able to count to the end when Christ shall deliver His earthly people out of their great sorrows, but not till then.

Chapter X.

Chapters x. xi., and xii. give us a summary of history in connection with the times of the Gentiles, chapter xii. particularly giving us the part the Jew shall play in the end.

Chapter x. begins with Daniel mourning and fasting for three whole weeks. At the end of that period he sees in vision a wonderful person by the banks of the great river —Hiddekel. Clothed in linen, girded with fine gold of Uphaz, his body like beryl, his face as the appearance of lightning, his eyes as lamps of fire, his feet like polished brass, and his voice like the voice of a multitude, the vision frightened his companions so that they fled to hide themselves, whilst its effect upon Daniel was to render him strengthless, and to turn his comeliness into corruption.

A hand touched him, and set him upon his knees and the palms of his hands. Evidently the vision, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus at a later date, had struck him to the ground. The man then bade him stand. He informed him that God respected his mourning and fasting, and that he was sent as God's messenger, but that the

Prince of the Kingdom of Persia had withstood him for one and twenty days; that is, during the three weeks in which Daniel fasted.

There is reference to three beings in this chapter, which throws fuller light upon the principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, the spiritual wickedness in high places (see Eph. vi. 12). Evidently the powers of evil under Satan are organized to a high degree. We have in this chapter some malignant spirit in charge of Satan's interests in Persia, and another in charge of his interests in Greece. One is called the Prince of Persia, the other the Prince of Greece.

Michael, the archanged, is called "Michael your prince" [that is Israel's], and it was the powerful intervention of Michael on behalf of God's interests that enabled this wonderful man seen in the vision to overcome the demoniacal power of the Prince of Persia, and come to Daniel's help.

Michael is said to be one of the chief princes. So in this chapter we get a glimpse of a world of evil spirits under Satan's arrangement, and of good spirits under God's.

Daniel is told that this wonderful being seen in his vision is come to make him understand the latter days. Daniel looked upon the ground and became dumb, whereupon one in similitude like a man touched the prophet's lips, and another came and strengthened him.

He then informed him that his present conflict was with the Prince of Persia, and later the Prince of Greece would come forth to oppose. Thus was indicated that the world-empire of Greece would follow that of Persia, and that under-world agencies would seek to use these empires for their own ends.

Chapter XI.

This chapter gives us the most extraordinary and detailed prophecy in the whole Word of God. When we remember that it prophesies the reigns of kings, royal marriages, wars, victories, defeats, plots, treaties, assassinations, it affords a very striking and unanswerable evidence of divine foreknowledge. For who but God could write down such detailed prophecies, which have come true with one exception. The one exception is still future, and awaits fulfilment which will surely come to pass.

We are first told that there should be three kings of Persia, and the fourth should be richer than they all, and that his riches should excite the cupidity of Greece.

These three kings were Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes, and Darius (this last being not Darius the Mede of chapter xi. 1, but a later Darius, distinguished by the addition of the name Hystaspes). In profane history their names were Cambyses, Smerdis the magician, and Darius Hystaspes.

The fourth and richer king was the well-known Xerxes. His mad attempt on Greece, his lashing the straits of Hellespont in impotent rage because the roughness of the water did not suit his purpose, are well known, and drew Greece on to attack him in turn.

In verses 3 and 4 we have the mighty King of Greece indicated—Alexander the Great—his great dominion being divided among his four generals to the exclusion of his own children, who all died in a few years.

Only two of these four divisions of the Grecian Empire became prominent in connection with the history of the Jews, viz., Assyria secured by Seleucus, and the Kingdom of the South, Egypt, which fell to the lot of Ptolemy.

Palestine, situate between these two kingdoms, naturally became their fighting ground, just as it will be in the future, and towards which events to-day are shaping things in a truly remarkable way.

The King of the North then is Assyria, the standpoint for Bible geographical definition* being always the Holy Land ; the King of the South, Egypt.

Verse 5 tells us that the King of the South shall be strong, and that his daughter should marry the King of the North, but that it would end in disaster.

The King of the South refers to Ptolemy I, and " one of his princes " refers to Seleucus I Nicator, who arrived at great power and became the " stronger."

To the superficial reader it would look as if the King of the North would marry the King of the South's daughter, meaning Ptolemy's daughter. But the titles of of the King of the North and of the South are carried on from king to king.

The expression in verse 6 " in the end of years " indicates a lapse of time, and as a matter of fact a treaty of peace was carried out by Seleucus's grandson, Antiochus II, with Ptolemy Philadelphus. Antiochus confirmed it by marrying Ptolemy's daughter, Bernice. In order to do this he repudiated his lawful wife, Laodike.

Daniel's prophecy, however, came true, for she did not retain the power of her arm, for the divorced wife stirred up her relatives and retainers, and it was literally fulfilled, " She shall be given up, and they that brought her," for she and her retinue were all murdered.

Then we read that a branch out of her roots shall come with an army against the King of the North and prevail. This came true when Bernice's brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes, marched north to avenge the murder of his sister.

His victory was so complete and his booty so great that it was true that he carried captives into Egypt, their gods with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and gold. This reference to Egypt is interesting as

*The point of geographical definition is in the Holy Land, with the face looking east. The hinder sea would then be the Mediterranean, the former sea the Dead Sea, etc.

a fresh proof of the geographical position of the Kingdom of the South.

It is said that the booty consisted of 40,000 talents of silver and 2500 precious vessels of gold and silver. That likewise the images of the gods formerly captured by Cambyses were recaptured and replaced with great pomp in the heathen temples.

We read that the King of the South would continue more years than the King of the North—he lived four or five years longer than his opponent, Seleucus Kallinicus.

" But his sons shall be stirred up " evidently refers to the sons of the King of the North, as the allusion in verse 11 to the King of the South fighting the King of the North proves.

This was fulfilled when the two sons of Seleucus, Alexander and Antiochus, the latter afterwards surnamed the Great, and the third of the dynasty to bear that name, succeeded their father. Alexander's death, it is said, occasioned by poison, left the field of operations to Antiochus, who defeated the King of the South several times.

The Egyptian King fulfilled verse 11 of our chapter by finally defeating Antiochus decisively, but he was not strengthened by it, as verse 12 states, for he gave himself up to excesses and debauchery, and eventually made peace with Antiochus.

Antiochus, thirteen years later, returned with an army greater than ever, thus fulfilling verse 13. He succeeded in getting allies, notably Macedonia and apostate Jews, these latter described as " the robbers of thy people."

So far the south has prevailed, now the north becomes victorious, and in the taking of Jerusalem and other cities verse 15 was fulfilled. The impotence of the King of the South is declared, and Antiochus's overrunning of Palestine—" the glorious land "—is foretold.

How touching is Jehovah's description of Palestine. Though at this time under the heel of the conqueror and

" consumed " as our verse says, it is described as " the glorious land."

At this time the Roman power was beginning to make its weight felt. The Egyptian Regents—the King, Ptolemy V. Epiphanes, ascending the throne when only four years of age in B.C. 205—appealed to the Romans. The Romans remonstrated twice with Antiochus. Thus sobered, he judged a marriage alliance with Egypt would strengthen his hold on that country, so he arranged that his daughter, Cleopatra, then a very young child, should be betrothed to the little seven-year-old King of Egypt. This he did hoping his daughter's influence would be on his side, thus corrupting her by seeking that she should abet him in his schemes and be traitorous to her husband and his country, over which she became queen. But our verse (17) says, " She shall not stand on his side [that is, her father's], neither be for him," for she turned out to be a faithful wife, and did not support her father.

Verse 18 speaks of Antiochus seeking to conquer Greece and the isles of the Mediterranean. Reaching Greece with a large army he found himself opposed by a Grecian and Roman alliance.

The prince causing the reproach to cease (verse 18) refers to the Roman Consul, Manius, who drove Antiochus out of Greece, destroying his fleet. Later Scipio defeated him soundly at the great battle of Magnesia. Verse 19 describes his end.

Making peace he agreed to pay a heavy indemnity. In seeking to exhort this some months later he was assassinated—" He shall stumble and fall, and not be found," was thus fulfilled.

Verse 21 describes Seleucus Philopater, the eldest son of Antiochus the Great. His reign started in deep financial embarrassment. The Romans insisted upon the heavy tribute exacted in his father's reign being paid. The whole of the twelve years that he reigned he was occupied in grinding taxes out of the people. At the end he was

deliberately murdered, so thus he died "neither in anger nor in battle."

From verse 21 to 32 we have a lengthy description of a king, infamous in history, Antiochus Epiphanes, by name. With him ends abruptly the story of the kings affecting Israel. The reason for this is not far to seek. This king is noticed at length in the Scriptures, not because he was great, for he was not great, but because of daring wickedness in connection with the Jews.

Partly he stands as a type of the last King of the North, which monarch has to come into prominence in the last days in connection with the great events that end up with the coming of Christ to reign upon the earth.

But still more is he the type of the Antichrist, who will be the wilful king reigning in the land and the great enemy of God and His people.

It is interesting and instructive to note that after these verses describe the King of the North, THE KING is introduced in verse 36. He is neither the King of the North nor the King of the South, but **the King**; that is, the King over the Jews, in reality the Antichrist.

The inspired narrative thus jumps from the type to the antitype, ignoring the whole of the Christian era, as is consistently done, and of purpose, throughout the Word of God when dealing with these subjects. The narrative jumps from Antiochus, the type of Antichrist, to Antichrist himself, the fulfilment of the type. But more of this when we come to verse 36 and on.

On the death of the last king, Seleucus (the son of Antiochus the Great), his younger son, Antiochus, was proclaimed king, though an infant, and in spite of the fact that his elder brother, Demetrius, was alive. The elder brother was held as hostage at Rome to ensure the payment of the tribute.

Antiochus Epiphanes, the youngest son of Antiochus the Great, and uncle therefore to the infant on the throne,

secured the kingdom peaceably and by flatteries. He was indeed a vile person, for though fond of regal display, his tastes were vile and degrading. As we have previously seen, Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to in chapter viii. 9—14 as the " little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." He was notorious for his interference with the Jews.

He began by flatteries and corruption, and ended with violence, overthrowing their worship, deposing the High Priest, Onias II., probably referred to in verse 22 as " the prince of the covenant."

Through alliances and trickery he entered into peaceable possession of the richest part of his kingdom, and in the extravagance of his gifts, exceeding all his predecessors in this, he fulfilled verse 24.

The sentence, " He shall forecast his devices against the strongholds, even for a time," refers to his invasion of Egypt, when he captured the fortresses of Alexandria, Memphis, etc.

But " even for a time " tells of a coming check, which was administered by the Romans. Afraid then of openly offending the Romans, he waited till the King of the South gathered a large army against him, and under the plea of self-defence he gathered immense forces, all the while secretly determined upon taking the offensive. This is foretold in verse 25. He twice defeated the King of the South, taking him prisoner.

The Egyptian king's brother, Ptolemy Euergetes, was put upon the throne. This afforded Antiochus the pretext of further aggression under the plea of espousing the cause of the deposed king. It was at this time that Antiochus made an impression on the Egyptian troops by appearing as their deliverer, so that many deserted from Ptolemy. Thus verse 26 was fulfilled, " Yea, they that feed of the portion of his [Ptolemy's] meat shall destroy him [that is, Ptolemy's power], and his [Antiochus']

army shall overflow ; and many shall fall down slain."

Finally a treaty of peace, which neither intended to keep, was made between Antiochus and Ptolemy, so that they told lies at one table, thus fulfilling verse 27.

The news coming to Antiochus' ears that the Jews were rejoicing at his reported death in Egypt, he wreaked his rage on them in his northward journey by sacking Jerusalem, sparing neither man, woman, nor child.

Verse 29 tells of another but disastrous expedition against Egypt. The ships of Chittim came against him, that is, the Roman power. Caius Popilius, Laenas, and others, leaders of the Roman army, demanded that Antiochus should cease troubling the Jews and Egypt. Antiochus endeavouring to evade the demand, Caius Popilius swiftly drew a circle round him, and sternly requested an answer before he should step out of the ring. Unwillingly, with outward complaisance, but with inward rage, Antiochus agreed to the Roman conditions, wreaking his vengeance on the Jews on his northward march.

Verse 31 was fulfilled when Antiochus in his rage stopped the Jewish worship, defiled the altar by sacrificing a sow upon it—an abomination to the Jew—set up a statue of Jupiter in the Temple, and decreed that he himself should be an object of worship. In all this he is a strong type of the Antichrist.

Verse 32, whilst it prophesies the wickedness of the many apostate Jews, whom he corrupted, also foretells the exploits of the Jews who refused to become apostate. This covers all the valour and deeds of the family of the Maccabees, and which occurred in the time unrecorded by Scripture between the closing of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament. At this time thousands were slain. The Maccabees performed prodigies of valour.

When the times of the Maccabees came to an end, and the mighty Roman power made Palestine tributary to it,

we come to verse 33, but which goes on to describe in the following verse a godly remnant, endeavouring to reach the conscience of the nation, yet the subject of persecution—the sword, the flame, captivity, and spoliation being their portion, as seen in verse 35. This goes on " to the time of the end."

From verse 35 the prophecy takes a mighty bound forward. Leaving the struggle of the Maccabees, the narrative jumps over the present Church dispensation and lands us in the strenuous days leading up " to the time of the end."

Passing over the doings of the godly remnant, we come to the antitype of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Just as Antiochus Epiphanes is prominent because of his relation to and persecution of the Jews, and is typical in one sense of the King of the North to reappear in the future days, and still more so of " **the King** "—the Antichrist—so " the King " will be prominent because of his relation to and persecution of the Jews in a future day.

We get a pen-and-ink sketch of this king in verses 36 to 40.

He is the fulfilment of that " another " of our Lord's words:

> "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in His own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43).

He is to be wilful ; he is to be blasphemous in his assumption of being God, thus answering to 2 Thess. ii. 4, taking a place above all, and speaking loudly against the God of gods.

He is allowed to prosper till the indignation be passed ; in other words, he is used of God to put the Jew through the great tribulation, foretold by our Lord likewise in Matt. xxiv.

He regards not the God of his fathers, thus indicating that the Antichrist—" the King "—will be a Jew ; nor does he regard the desire of women, referring to Christ.

His supreme will as the great instrument of Satan is to exalt himself above all, even above God. Along with this, according to Rev. xiii. 15, he causes divine honours to be paid to the image of the Beast, that is, of the head of the revived Roman Empire. We believe the image set up by Antichrist's orders will prove to be "the abomination of desolation" mentioned in chapter xii. 11, and referred to by our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 15.

Further, this wilful king honours the god of forces. Man is not sufficient in himself, and spite of assuming to be God, this blasphemer must lean on something, and thus he invents a god to meet his need, probably referring to the image of the first beast set up for worship in the temple.

Evidently from verse 39 this "strange god's" image is placed in every important city.

From Dan. ix. 27 we have seen that the Roman Empire makes the treaty with the Jews for seven years—Daniel's seventieth week—treating his solemn bond as "a scrap of paper" in the middle of the week, thus inaugurating the great tribulation, which is destined to produce repentance in the Jew, and open the way for the Messiah to return, and thus in that way resulting in the doom of the first beast—the Roman Emperor—and of the second beast —the Antichrist.

Verse 40 leaves us with the wilful king as the object of attack from both north and south. It does not tell us what **his end** will be ; this we learn from Rev. xix. 20, where under the name of "the false prophet" he is taken with the beast by the Lord at the great battle of Armageddon and doomed to the lake of fire.

The King of the South pushes at him ; the King of the North comes against him like a whirlwind.

The King of the North, we believe, will probably be the Turk driven out of Europe and also out of Palestine and Mesopotamia, forming a compact kingdom somewhere north of Palestine.

That he comes with " many ships " as well as chariots and horsemen proves him to be a naval as well as a military power, if not in himself, at any rate through alliance.

The North is victorious over Palestine, still "the glorious land," and over Egypt. In the wisdom of God Edom and Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon escape, not, we believe, on their own account, but reserved according to Isaiah xi. 14 to receive their overthrow at the hands of the Jews, whose implacable enemies from all time they have been.

But in the flush of victory, tidings out of the east and north shall trouble the conqueror, probably from Russia, and the eastern powers over the Euphrates will be moving against him. With fury he returns north, he plants his army between Jerusalem and the sea (that is the literal interpretation of the passage), and there he comes to an end—thoroughly beaten and destroyed—" none to help him "—this doubtless by the personal intervention of Messiah in glory.

Chapter XII.

Verse 1 indicates that this is the time of the great tribulation. This verse, Jer. xxx. 4—9, and Matt. xxiv., all refer to the same time of trouble, "such as was not since the beginning of the world."

Verse 2 gives the result of the " great tribulation." A time of Jewish national awakening is the result.

" Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth " refers to the present state of Israel. Scattered, without a home, asleep towards God, refusing their Messiah, they will spiritually awake.

This process of awakening is described in Ezek. xxxvii., and details of it are vividly portrayed in Zech. xii. These Scriptures we propose to treat in more or less detail further on.

In this awakening two classes are disclosed—those who awake to everlasting life, and others to shame and ever-

lasting contempt: in other words, those who receive the Gospel of the Kingdom, and thus are ready for the advent of the Messiah ; and those who reject the message.

Verse 3 tells us how the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and how they will turn many to righteousness, evidently an allusion to the labours of the Lord's earthly brethren, the godly Jews, who will evangelize the nations, and the results of whose mission are seen in Matt. xxv. 31—46, in the sheep who go into everlasting life ; the rejection of their message seen in the goats, who go into everlasting punishment. In verse 4 Daniel is bidden to seal up the book till the time of the end.

Finally, Daniel sees "other two," one on this side of the bank of the river, the other on that side of the bank of the river. The question is asked, " How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The answer is given solemnly, " It shall be for a time, times and a half," that is, for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years, that is, during the great tribulation.

Daniel himself heard this, but failing to understand, asked, " O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things ? " He is bidden to go his way, as the words are closed up and sealed till the end of time. The two classes are again referred to. The wicked shall not understand, but the wise will understand.

Evidently the blow of judgment does not fall in all its entirety at the end of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, as verse 11 tells us from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away and the abomination of desolation set up, answering to Matt. xxiv. 15, should be one thousand two hundred and ninety days, or a month later, and blessed is the one that waits and comes to one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days* ; that is,

*" I have thought it possible that this computation may arise from this. An intercalary month to the 1260 days, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, and then 45 days if the years were ecclesiastical years, would

forty-five days still later, or a month and a half.

Evidently from Scripture " the King " meets his doom before " the King of the North " does. The King, Antichrist, meets his doom as seen in Rev. xix. 20, whereas " the King of the North " probably meets his doom later as described in Zech. xiv.

Daniel is to go his way; he should rest, that is pass off the scene, but stand in his lot at the end of the days ; that is, in resurrection he will find his place in the scene of glory which the Lord shall bring in, and be awarded his position in the glorious kingdom then set up.

The instruction to Daniel to seal up the sayings of his prophecy even to the time of the end stands in contrast to the Apostle John, who is bidden, " Seal **not** the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand " (Rev. xxii. 10).

In truth the rejection of Christ brings us to the threshold of the time of the end, and the Christian gifted with the Holy Spirit of truth is encouraged to know all these things.

May God help us all to a true and spiritual knowledge of this prophecy.

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bring up to the feast of tabernacles: but I offer no judgment on it. At any rate, the statement is clear that then the sanctuary of God will be cleansed in Jerusalem."—**Synopsis of the Books of the Bible,** vol. ii., new edition, revised, p. 456.

BRIEF EXPOSITION OF ZECHARIAH.

ZECHARIAH was a post-captivity prophet, and contemporary with Haggai. They both prophesied in the second year of Darius, that is to say, in the days of the second of the four world-empires foretold in Scripture.

Zechariah is chiefly noted for the number of short and instructive visions—eight in all—closing wth chapter vi., and the constant and characteristic use of the expression —**In that day**—referring to the final judgments of the Lord, culminating in the overthrow of Israel's enemies, the purification of His people, and the introduction of the Millennial reign of Christ.

. . . . .

THE FIRST VISION.

(Chapter i. 7—17).

The prophet sees a man riding on a red horse, and behind him were red, speckled, and white horses. A horse in Scripture is the symbol of divine energy of government on the earth. Behind all man's scheming, and Satan's malevolence, God is surely evolving His own plan and will.

Seeing that already the Babylonian Empire had passed away, we find symbolized in these three sets of riderless horses the three world-empires—Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman.

The fact of the man riding the red horse—that is to say, the horse is not riderless, but controlled—and the colour of the first set of horses being also red, may point to the very distinct way in which God used the second Empire to do His will in making its rulers favourable to His people.

The prophet asks what these horses mean, and he is told, "These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk

to and fro through the earth," whereupon they report that they have done so, and the whole earth sits still and is at rest.

Remember everything is looked at from the standpoint of God's ancient people. The fact is, the nations into whose hands God has committed the government of the world are content to see God's people scattered and their land despoiled. They use their power, not in relation to God or intelligently as doing His purpose, but for their own lust, power, and ease.

The horses being riderless shows that the goverments think they are doing their own unbridled will, but behind them, and unconsciously to the governments, God is carrying out His own purpose, and using them in its fulfilment.

The prophet is thus moved to inquire how long God will delay having mercy on His people, seeing the indignation has lasted seventy years. The answer comes in good and comfortable words, and in the prophet being given a second vision.

The Second Vision.

(Chapter i. 18—21).

The prophet sees four horns, and he is told these represent the Gentile powers who have scattered God's ancient people, doubtless answering once more to the four world-empires foretold in Scripture.

Then the prophet sees four carpenters—four being a full answer to the four horns—and is told that they come to cast out the horns of the Gentiles; in other words, the prophet gets the answer to his question, that however impossible it looks, the enemies of God's people shall be destroyed, and His people blessed. This would be humanly impossible one would think, but the answer lies in one word—GOD.

The word "carpenter" is literally "carver or engraver." The four carvers, it is suggested, carve or fray the four

horns, and may represent "the four sore judgments" of Ezek. xiv. 21, viz., the sword, famine, evil beasts, and pestilence, that shall diminish and weaken the great Gentile powers at the end (see also Rev. vi. 8).

The Third Vision.

(Chapter ii. 1—13).

The third vision is that of a man with a measuring line, going up to measure Jerusalem, a symbol that that city would come under God's attention for blessing.

There are two other instances of the measuring reed or line indicating that the time has come for God's gracious intervention in blessing, viz., Ezek. xl.—xlviii. 35, and Rev. xi. 1, 2.

Then follows a glowing description of how Jerusalem shall be inhabited as a city without walls, and of the protection that the Lord will be to His people, even as a wall of fire round about.

A good deal of speculation has been indulged in as to what the words, "After the glory," can mean. Matt. xxiv. 30 appears to solve the difficulty in showing us the Lord coming in glory, and **then** dealing with the nations in reference to Israel, as seen in the words, "**When** the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, **then** shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations," etc. (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). How magnificently the chapter ends: "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation" verse 13).

The Fourth Vision.

(Chapter iii. 1—10).

Chapter iii. has often been used by preachers as an illustration of the Gospel, and beautiful it is in this aspect. But we are here concerned with the strict interpretation of the vision.

The previous chapter uses for the first time the characteristic expression, "In that day" (verse 11), employed about a score of times in the book, notably in chapter xii. It speaks in glowing terms of the restoration of Israel and the blessing in Zion. But God is righteous, and the vision in chapter iii. informs us **how** this restoration will take place.

In this vision there are three prominent actors—Joshua, the High Priest, the Angel of the Lord—that is, Jehovah Himself,—and Satan, the accuser. Exod. xxiii. 20—23 tells us who the Angel of the Lord is. The translators, seeing its obvious meaning, have spelt "Angel" with a capital letter, whilst the sentence, "My name is in Him," verse 21), is conclusive testimony as to who the Angel is, even Jehovah in relation to His people.

Joshua stands as the representative of Israel, and what happened to him symbolically will happen to Israel in a future day.

Satan stands to resist the action of the Lord towards Joshua. That action is one of grace and compassion. Notice how verse 2 does not say, "the Angel of the Lord," but "THE LORD said unto Satan."

He therefore asserts His sovereignty in the choice of Jerusalem, Hs right to bless. He speaks of His choice of Jerusalem, and then turns to Joshua, saying of him, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" thus placing Jerusalem and Joshua together, showing that the latter stands for more than himself, but is typical of the whole people.

Joshua's filthy garments are typical of the moral condition of Israel. A High Priest is the last person one would associate with the thought of filthy garments, and it gives us thus a very vivid and affecting presentation of the utterly ungodly state of the nation in the last days when God shall bring them into blessing once more.

The filthy garments are removed, iniquity is caused to

pass away, a change of raiment is given, and a fair mitre is placed on the High Priest's head.

Notice as the vision proceeds it is (1) "The Angel of the Lord" (verse 1); (2) "The Lord" (verse 2); and (3) "I" (verses 4, 5); showing more and more the Lord's direct and interested dealings in the matter.

Thus in symbol we see (1) Israel cleansed; (2) Israel's change of habits and ways before God; (3) Israel's resumption of temple worship and right relationship to God as a kingdom of priests.

The first will be fulfilled when "a fountain for sin and uncleanness" is opened for "the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (chapter xiii. 1); the second at the same time, when the new covenant shall be made with Israel (Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Ezek. xxxvi. 25—30), "a new heart" and "a new spirit" given them, and God's Spirit communicated to them. Their ways will then be such as is symbolized by the change of raiment, whilst the third will be seen in the re-established worship of God in the temple, built according to Ezekiel's vision.

But **how** is all this change to be effected in such a sinful nation, if God is to keep His character for righteousness and holiness? The answer is touchingly beautiful.

Attention is called in verse 8 to the fact that Joshua and his fellows were men to be wondered at, that is, men set for a sign or symbol. This is the meaning of the passage. Ezekiel xii. 11 is a clear statement as to this in the case of that prophet.

Then we get the wonderful statement:—

> "Behold, I will bring forth My **Servant,** the BRANCH" (verse 8).

All this blessing that is set out prophetically before us for Israel is secured in Christ.

And how did Christ, Jehovah's Servant, **serve**? Hebrews x. furnishes the answer. He came to do God's will, and that was accomplished at Calvary's cross. In that very chapter in a book written to Jewish believers they

are reminded as the result of the work of Christ and upon its righteous ground that "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord. I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them ["change of raiment"]; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more ["filthy garments" removed]" (verses 16, 17).

Then Joshua is called upon to behold "the Stone," "one Stone," and set in it "seven eyes," and graving engraved upon it. Here we get three wonderful things: (1) "The Stone," the "one Stone," reminding us of the foundation Stone, tried, precious, and sure, the corner Stone, spoken of in Isa. xxviii. 16, showing us that all blessing is secured in Christ. (2) "Seven eyes," speaking of Messiah's God-like qualities, for He is the God of omniscience and perfect wisdom in carrying out divine purposes of blessing for Israel. (3) The engraving speaks of God's fixed, unalterable decision to bless, in the words, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." This will surely come to pass, leading to the Millennium described in the last verse of the chapter.

The Fifth Vision.

(Chapter iv. 1—14).

The vision is that of a candlestick all of gold and with seven lamps. Two olive trees stood by it, which emptied their golden oil presumably into the bowl at the top, which ran through seven pipes to feed the seven lamps.

There is a distinct order in the third, fourth, and fifth visions. The third gives us **the promise** of restoration to Israel; the fourth **the means** by which God in righteous grace will bring it to pass; the fifth **the power** by which Israel's testimony will be maintained in the Millennium, even that of the Holy Spirit.

The candlestick ever stands as a symbol of testimony; "all of gold" showing that it is a divine Person who shall render the testimony, even the Holy Ghost.

The seven branches speak of divine perfection, omniscience, fulness of testimony. Again and again the Old Testament, prophesying of the future glory of Israel, testifies how the testimony will be maintained, "I will put My Spirit within you" (Ezek. xxxvi. 27). Passage after passage could be adduced on this point.

Then Zerubbabel, the rebuilder of the temple, is addressed. Just as Joshua was typical of the nation, so Zerubbabel is typical of Christ. He was indeed His ancestor according to the flesh (Matt. i. 12), whilst his work in rebuilding the temple is typical of what Christ shall do in a future day.

The great mountain before Zerubbabel sets forth all the difficulties that lay before him in his work, as it symbolizes all the terrible opposition of the Jew to Christ, which would if possible have frustrated the will of God.

How touching are the Lord's words in Matt. xxi. 17-22 as explaining this. He hungered. There were no figs on the barren fig tree, no response from Israel for the heart of Christ. He hungered. His hunger shall be satisfied, and if the actual fig tree cursed by the Lord should bear no fruit for ever, yet the fig tree of Israel shall bear fruit, even if God has to prune it for two thousand years.

When the disciples marvelled that the Lord should cause the fig tree to wither away so soon, He tells them that if they had faith, and were without doubt, they should say to this mountain, "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea," and it should be done.

The great mountain at that time was the implacable unbelief of the Jews. That mountain has been removed, and cast into the sea; that is to say, the Jews have been dispersed among the nations, and will continue to be so till God's plans of blessing in this dispensation are worked out. Then He will bless in relation to the Jew again, leading up to the point of blessing them in their own land, and through them the nations of the earth.

In Zerubbabel's day the mountain should become a plain, and the Headstone placed with joy, that is the completion of the work, and the shouts heard, "Grace, grace unto it."

So the greater than Zerubbabel, at once the Builder and Headstone, the Completion, as He is the Foundation Stone, of Israel's blessing, shall yet turn the great mountain of Israel's unbelief into the plain of her change of heart and mind, when the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured forth upon the nation.

It was indeed a day of small things in Zerubbabel's day. Spite of weakness and depression, he would not only lay the foundation of the house, but finish it, just as Christ laid the moral foundation of it in His death, and shall finish it in the day of His power.

The plummet shall be in Zerubbabel's hand with those "seven," that is, in future fulfilment Christ shall build according to His perfection and glory. These eyes are running to and fro through the whole earth; that is, God is using every providential happening in His omniscience to work out the end He has in view. Surely the Great War is a wonderful example of this, as we see how it is leading up to the return of the Jews to Palestine.

Finally the prophet asks the meaning of the two olive branches that empty the golden oil out of themselves through the golden branches. He is told that they are "the two anointed ones [sons of oil] that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (verse 14).

Surely the twofold testimony of Israel in the future day will be seen in and through her King, her Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, as (1) Priest and (2) King. As Priest He will, in the power of God's Spirit, represent and maintain the people before God; as King He will represent God and maintain His character in rule over His people. He will fulfil the type of Melchisedec, who was a priest and a king, for Christ is made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. "He shall bear the glory, and

shall sit and rule upon His throne [the king character]; and He shall be a priest upon His throne [the priest character]" (chap. vi. 13).

The Sixth Vision.

Chapter v. 1—4).

The prophet sees a flying roll. The roll was that on which the Jews of old inscribed their writing, and was made of the skin of animals, or of papyrus.

Its size was great—twenty cubits by ten cubits, that is, the same dimensions as the porch of Solomon's temple (1 Kings vi. 3). There may be some connection between the two, probably an indication that judgment would go forth (**flying** roll) according to the holiness of God's house.

The prophet is told that this represented the curse that goeth forth into all the earth. Other translations give **land** for "earth"; the land referring to Palestine, and the context bears this out.

Stealing and swearing are the two sins recorded on the roll—stealing, a sin against one's fellow-man (though all sin is against God); and swearing, a sin exclusively against God. Doubtless these two sins are representative of all sins. In murder, life is stolen; in lying, truth is stolen; in adultery, chastity is stolen, whilst swearing would cover all deliquencies Godward.

God's judgment upon sin is then seen in the flying roll; that is, the curse of God enters the house of the sinner till it is consumed.

Doubtless this vision has reference to the Lord acting in judgment, clearing the land of all defilement, prior to His setting up His kingdom.

The Seventh Vision.

(Chapter v. 5—11).

An ephah—a measure in common use at that day—is seen by the prophet, and when a talent of lead, apparently a weighty lid, was lifted up, a woman was seen

sitting in the midst of the ephah. The prophet was told, "This is wickedness."

The ephah being a measure in common use seems to point to the way the Jew has taken up commerce. When in captivity in Babylon they had given up idolatry, but acquired that spirit of commercialism which is such a marked feature of the nation to-day. Throughout the world the Jew is notorious, as on the one hand refusing Christ, and as a consequence they are scattered among the nations by the government of God; and on the other hand in making commerce their aim in a very intense way.

The weight of lead being cast in the mouth of the ephah speaks of God's hand in restraint, keeping wickedness within bounds.

The prophet sees two women, symbolical of evil again, the wind in their wings; that is, instead of restraint being placed upon them, providential circumstances are allowed to help them. They lift up the ephah between heaven and earth, and when the prophet asks whence they will bear it, the answer is given, "To build it an house in the land of Shinar, and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base."

As the woman is a symbol of "wickedness," so the two women set forth two forms of wickedness. Bearing the ephah to the land of Shinar throws light on this.

Shinar is first mentioned in Scripture in Gen. x. 10 as the home of Nimrod, and it was in that country that Babel (Greek—**Babylon**) was built. Babel was the place where man's speech was confounded, because of his impious attempt to be independent of God. Tracing Babel, or Babylon, through Scripture, we find it connected with two evils—idolatry and infidelity. These two are often connected, as witness the slavish idolatry of the Roman Catholic system, and its infidelity. These, then, will mark the Jew in the last days. There will be the Anti-

christ, who will be infidel, that is, refusing God ; and idolatrous, as setting up himself, and the image of the beast, to be worshipped.

These evils began in Babylon, and Babylon in that way is to characterize the Jew in the last days in one form, and the Roman Catholic system in another. For this latter see Rev. xvii., xviii.

The Eighth Vision.

Chapter vi. 1—8).

Here the prophet sees four chariots emerging from between two mountains of brass. He is told that these are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. "Mountains" speak of government; "mountains **of brass**," government being exercised in judgment, according to man's responsibility Godward ; "chariots" speak of controlled motion, the horses being controlled by the driver.

The vision is to teach that behind man's apparent arranging and planning, God is directing earthly affairs for His own wise purposes and glory in the government of this world. In these four chariots is seen the rise and progress of the four world-empires.

The black horse (Babylonian Empire) had passed away, the north country had quieted the angel's spirit. The white would seem to indicate the Grecian Empire. This we find by comparing chapter i. 8. If the white horse in that chapter is clearly symbolic of the Grecian Empire, it will be so in chapter vi. 6. The grisled horses (grisled being a mixture of colours) speak of the blending of Greek and Roman power, which took place historically as we saw in our study of Daniel xi.; whilst eventually the Grecian power gave way to the Roman, and the Roman held undisputed sway. This is indicated by the bay horses. Their influence is yet to be seen in the great happenings of the world after the Church is caught up.

The Crowning.

(Chapter vi. 9—15).

After the judgment comes the victory; after the struggle with evil comes the enthronement of the Messiah.

This is symbolized in the crowning of Joshua, type of Christ in His Millennial reign.

Joshua is, however, bidden to look on the Antitype, who will completely eclipse the type:—

> "Behold the Man whose name is THE BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both [that is, between His kingly and priestly glories]" (verses 12, 13).

The Fasting, Promise, and Exhortation.

(Chapters vii., viii.)

Chapter vi. closes Zechariah's visions, and chapter vii. begins with a new date—the fourth year of King Darius.

Chapters vii and viii. tell how the fasting during the seventy years of captivity in Babylon was only outward and hypocritical, and the continued refusal of the people to answer to God's call would lead to their dispersal among the nations, which actually took place A.D. 70.

But immediately Zechariah prophesies of the blessing of Zion and Jerusalem, finishing up with an exhortation which, if it had been responded to, would have made the Jew under Christ the blessing of the world. That day is yet to come.

"The Burden of the Word of the Lord."

(Chapter ix).

Judgment is pronounced upon the nations and places round about Palestine. The conjunction of verses 8 and 13 seems to point to Alexander the Great, who fulfilled

the judgments pronounced on Damascus, Tyre, Sidon, Philistina, but who, warned of God in a dream, passed by Jerusalem without harming it, though the future holds within it the larger fulfilment.

All works to the time when the King shall come, just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. Jerusalem had her opportunity of receiving her Messiah in this way. Refusing, the fulfilment awaits a future and a glorious day.

Israel's Return to the Land Prophesied.

(Chapter x).

Israel will yet ask for the latter rain, and receive Jehovah's answer. Earthly prosperity—figure, too, of spiritual blessing—shall be restored thereby to the land. Punishment on evil shepherds shall fall, but out of Judah shall come forth "the corner" (viz., Christ, as the chief corner Stone, the solid Foundation for all God's blessing to His people); "the nail" (viz., Christ, the nail hung in a sure place, on whom can be safely hung the glory of the house); and "the battle bow" (viz., Christ the Power of God for vanquishing all His foes). Whether for blessing or for judgment, all is found in Christ. Israel shall be yet gathered, and their enemies vanquished.

"Beauty" and "Bands."

(Chapter xi).

"Beauty" (**lit.** graciousness) sets forth the lowly way in which Christ presented Himself as the witness of God to the Jewish nation; "bands" (**lit.** union) Jehovah's desire to unite His people (Judah and Israel) in blessing under the reign of Christ.

But Israel rejected Christ, valuing Him at thirty pieces of silver. God's desire is frustrated for the moment. Meanwhile His government is over the nation because of its rejection of Christ; the staff—Beauty—is broken.

God's government leads to the raising up of the idol shepherd, who shall eat the flesh of the fat of the flock, and tear their claws in pieces, terrible picture of the Antichrist, of whom Christ prophesied, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, **him ye will receive**" (John v. 43). His activity in "the great tribulation" and his final doom are foreshadowed in verse 17.

"IN THAT DAY."

(Chapters xii.—xiv).

"IN THAT DAY" is the oft-repeated, characteristic phrase of these last three chapters. It refers to the time of "the great tribulation," "the time of Jacob's trouble," to the last efforts of the Gentile power in opposing God in the destruction of His people, to Messiah's personal intervention, and the setting up of His glorious Millennial kingdom.

As chapter xi. ends up with the introduction of the idol shepherd—the Antichrist—it is but to be expected that chapter xii. should begin with the condition of things in Palestine as seen in "the great tribulation."

The order of things is clear.

Chapter xii., verses 2, 3, tells us that Jerusalem is to be a "cup of trembling" ["cup of bewilderment," N.T.] to the surrounding nations, when they lay siege to the city: "a burdensome stone" for all peoples, who will only attempt its ruin to be ruined themselves.

Verses 4, 5 tell how Jehovah will smite every horse with astonishment, every rider with madness, in order to weaken their power, and thus encourage the hearts of the governors of Judah to realize that God is their strength.

An illustration is well found in the incident of the Midianites, when Gideon, bursting into their camp with the cry, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon," so confounded them that they slew each other—"the Lord

set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host."

Verses 6, 7, tell how God will raise up brave leaders of His people, who will under His providential hand deliver His people, saving Judah first rather than Jerusalem, in order that the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not magnify themselves against Judah.

Verse 8 is one of the most beautiful and striking verses of the Bible. It illustrates the quickening power of the presence of Christ.

> "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

It is said that the effect of Napoleon's presence on the field of battle was magical. What shall be the effect of Christ's intervention on behalf of His people? The feeble, stumbling, tottering one in that day shall be as David, who stands as an emblem of the greatest strength and courage; and the house of David shall be as God. The Lord will be with His people "in that day," and will immediately charge the air with a sense of victory.

Verses 10—14 bring before us the repentance necessary on the part of Israel to fit them for the blessing designed for them since the day that God first blessed Abraham, saying that in his seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The spirit of grace and supplications will be poured out upon Israel. At last the long dark night of Israel's backsliding will come to an end. No longer in bitter hatred of Christ will they continue. The gracious work of the Spirit of God will soften those proud, adamantine hearts and stubborn wills.

And when this awakening shall have taken place, and the nation realize their awful sin in crucifying their Messiah, and in bitter opposition to Him which has been the marked feature of the Jew from that day to this—when they shall have realized that their being scattered among the nations for long centuries has been the direct govern-

ment of God for their awful sin—when they shall have looked upon Him whom they have pierced, then their repentance will be profound and heart-rending.

They will realize the mercy of God in bringing them back to their own land when in unbelief; they will recognize that but for the intervention of the Lord their enemies must have swallowed them up, and as all this dawns upon their minds repentance will flood their souls.

Their mourning is said to be great, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. In Revelation we learn of Armageddon (—the **hill** Megiddon); here we have the **valley** of Megiddon mentioned. In the former case judgment and destruction falls on the enemies of the Lord; in the latter, lifting up and blessing flowing forth to those repentant ones. How it fulfills the Scripture,

> "Every **valley** shall be exalted, and every mountain and **hill** shall be made low" (Isa. xl. 4).

Verses 12—14 emphasize the depth and bitterness of soul that will mark the nation then. It is no general superficial repentance. Families cannot mix in this. Even husbands and wives must go apart in bitterness of soul, and prostrate themselves before their pierced Messiah in contrition, repentance, tears, and cries.

The house of David represents the people generally; the house of Nathan "stands as representative of the prophets"; the house of Levi, of the priests; Shimei [Shimites, see Num. iii. 18—21], of the Levites. Thus the whole nation in detail is shown to be affected in deep repentance.

Chapter xiii. 1, brings before us the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Consequent on repentance effectual and moral cleansing will take place. It is clearly here not a fountain of blood but of **water.** Fountains in Scripture are ever associated with **water.** It is here the **moral** cleansing of the nation by the Word of God. New

Birth will answer to it. A nation shall be born in a day.

Verses 2—4 tell us of the land being cleared of idolatry and lying prophets. What joy for Israel in that day when her heart is turned to her once-crucified Messiah to witness this purging of their land.

Verses 5—7 come in abruptly. Passing from the judgment pronounced upon the false prophets, we have the Messiah Himself presented to us in a deeply touching way. The One who indeed could claim rightfully to be **the** Prophet of the Lord makes no such claim. He was refused as such by His own. But He goes on with His own blessed work. He says,

> "I am an husbandman [a tiller of the ground]."

He came to cultivate men for God. He came to give, to sow the good seed of the Kingdom in the hearts of men. He says,

> "Man taught me to keep cattle from My youth [that is, man acquired Me as bondman from My youth, N.T.]."

In lowly grace He took the place of being a slave to the needs of men.

What did He get? Wounds! He was wounded in the house of His friends. Israel was taught in Old Testament prophecy to wait for and expect their Messiah, and when He came they rejected Him. In this expression, "the house of My **friends**," we see His unalterable love for His people. How often a flood of light comes out in a single word.

But there is something deeper. It is not only the wounds inflicted by His friends we are bidden to contemplate, but Jehovah's sword is called upon to awake against the Man that is His Fellow. How remarkable is this prophecy! How it presents to us the glory of Messiah's person, that He who was a Man on earth was indeed Jehovah's fellow, that is God.

The awakened sword brings before us the solemn mystery of the Cross, that atonement lies in God's judgment on sin. This is more implied in the consequences that follow than directly stated. How could Jehovah's hand turn upon the little ones for blessing unless He could do it **righteously**? Hence the necessity for the atonement.

The result of the smiting is that the sheep are scattered. God's governmental wrath falls upon the nation, which has rejected His sending of Messiah, and for over eighteen centuries the last remnants of the nation have been scattered, the people of the weary breast and the wandering feet, as they have been so aptly described. Jehovah's hand would turn upon the little ones, He would bring back His people to their own land. And He will do this in righteousness and in mercy.

Between the stroke of the sword (fulfilled on the Cross) in verse 7 and the events prophesied in verses 8 and 9, we must interpose the whole of the present dispensation, which is not taken account of in Old Testament prophecies.

Two parts of the nation being cut off speaks of "the great tribulation," the last fiery trial that God must put His people through, whilst one third being left, refined as silver, tried as gold, will form those who shall call on Jehovah's name, and be publicly acknowledged as His people.

Chapter xiv. sheds light on how this shall come to pass. Verse 2 gives a graphic description of the siege of Jerusalem, of its capture, houses looted, women ravished, and half of the city captured. The remaining half in their sore distress will behold the Lord fighting on their behalf.

In Rev. xix. 11—21 we get the intervention of the Lord in the great battle of Armageddon, when the beast and false prophet will be taken and consigned to the lake of fire. Ths battle receives its typical name from the hill Megiddo, which is situate in the territory of Ephraim. But the events of Zech. xiv. are not detailed in Rev. xix.,

nor are the events recorded in Rev. xix. detailed in Zech. xiv.

Armageddon is detailed as the expression of God's judgment upon the Gentile power; whereas the battle of Zech. xiv. gives us in the destruction of the Lord's enemies the deliverance of the Jew.

Armageddon evidently precedes Zechariah's nameless battle, and the siege of Jerusalem. It is like two battles in one campaign, first the Lord appearing from heaven and destroying the Gentile power at Armageddon, then appearing actually on the Mount of Olives, for the succour and deliverance of His people there.

In Armageddon evidently the breath of the Lord is sufficient sword for the slaughter of His enemies, just as His breath slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's army of old. In the siege of Jerusalem the Lord in His wisdom does not deal in the same summary way, but comes down to the Mount of Olives. His feet touching the Mount is the signal for it to cleave in two, thus making, for the sore-pressed remnant, a way of escape to the valley of the mountains. The Lord fights "as when He fought in the day of battle," and there is no need to record the finish of the fight. VICTORY, full and final, the enemy destroyed and His people completely delivered, can alone be the result.

It may be the terrible earthquake that happened in the reign of King Uzziah, and that evidently formed a painful landmark in the history of Judah (see Amos i. 1), was allowed as a picture of what will happen when the Lord comes back to earth. The earthquake that will cleave the Mount of Olives is evidently the same as is referred to under the seventh trumpet (Rev. xi. 19) and under the seventh vial (Rev. xvi. 18).

The terrible conflict over, verse 6 introduces us to the blessedness of the personal reign of Christ.

> "In that day the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass,

that at evening time it shall be light" (verses 6, 7).

These verses are undoubtedly difficult of explanation. Many have been the explanations. That some physical and marked change may take place as to night and day, light and darkness, is quite possible, just as God intervened for Israel when Joshua commanded the sun to stand still. As to any explanation on those lines we do not feel competent to proceed, but if we take it **morally** it might mean that in this world there is mingled moral light and darkness, but when the Lord shall reign, His day will be characterized altogether by His wonderful presence. At evening time when darkness would be naturally expected, it would be light. That is to say, in this world, even morally, things move in cycles. Take the life of a ruler: it is first light, that is vigour, intellect, will, and as old age creeps on darkness sets in, powers slow down, hands that once held the reins of power lose their grip; but when the Lord comes this order of things shall cease, and in His presence things will pursue their way apart from the vicissitudes and frailties that characterize us now.

Then again we may find in the rule of kingdoms light and darkness, as for instance to-day, comparatively speaking there is light where rulers are more or less governed by the fear of God, treaties are observed, the sanctities of life respected, laws made on a righteous basis; darkness, where men are refusing God's laws, and substitute for them the horrible doctrine that might is right, and all the terrible evils that follow in its train.

Or, for instance, we find now on the one hand the light of evangelical teaching; on the other the darkness of Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritualism, Millennial Dawnism, etc.

But in that day the moral effects of Christ's presence and rule will bring about **uniformity for that which is according to God.**

So we read that living waters, starting from the "east gate" of the sanctuary, shall go out from Jerusalem, half

towards the former sea (the Dead Sea) and half towards the hinder sea (the Mediterranean), and that the drought of summer will not hinder its perennial flow—"in summer and in winter it shall be." Deut. xi. 24 proves that "the uttermost sea" (**the hinder sea,** N.T.) is the Mediterranean, the well-known western boundary of the land.

Whilst this bifurcated stream brings untold agricultural wealth to the country, enabling it to bear the large population that must be the result of a high birth-rate and practically no death-rate during the Millennium, it undoubtedly has a moral significance that "in that day" **spiritual** blessing will flow from Jerusalem, the city of Messiah's presence and rule.

So the blessing widens out, "The Lord shall be King over **all the earth.**" Happy prospect for this sin-cursed death-ridden earth, with its sorrows. Once God is given His true place, how different everything will be.

Well might the phrase, "In that day," be the subject of many a glowing prophecy, as we have seen.

Then we are informed of great physical changes to take place in the land. It is to be "turned as a plain, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem," etc. Hills will disappear and give way to lands easy of cultivation. The Dead Sea is to be healed and to be full of fish (see Ezekiel xlvii. 6—10). En-gedi and En-eglaim are on opposite shores of the Dead Sea. The land is to be prosperous—Jerusalem a place to be safely inhabited.

Two things are predicted as happening to the Lord's enemies. They will be affected by a fearful plague, consuming their flesh as they stand on their feet, their eyes eaten out of their sockets, and their tongues consumed in their mouths.

How striking is the judgment! Their whole body coming under God's judgment. Their feet employed to carry them to fight against the Lord, their eyes used in directing their munitions of war, and their tongues in blaspheming God's Christ, shall all be affected.

Further, they are to be troubled by a tumult (**panic,** N.T.) from the Lord, so that in their blind fear they will destroy each other.

Evidently this will take place at the time of the siege, and be so striking and signal a punishment from God that it will be acknowledged to be an intervention of the divine hand in judgment.

Judah is to enrich herself by the spoil of the Lord's enemies, whilst even the horses, mules, camels, and beasts used by the enemy shall be visited by the same plague as their owners. Thus strikingly will the Lord vindicate His name,

All the Gentile survivors will go up from year to year to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles, whilst those who may refuse shall find the rain withheld from their land, meaning their destruction. If Egypt should be found refusing the claims of God's House, as theirs is a rainless country, depending upon the Nile and its irrigation for its prosperity, the plague shall visit them.

Finally, we close the book with a glowing description of the scene of blessedness. Even the bells upon the horses shall have

"HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD"

marked upon them, and the very pots of the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord.

Thus concludes a deeply interesting and instructive prophecy. It ends with the Lord's triumph, the joy of His presence, and the happiness of holiness.

ISRAEL'S RETURN TO THE HOLY LAND PROPHESIED.

We propose under this heading to place before our readers a few passages which foretell Israel's return to their ancient land.

. . . . .

> "And He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly: none shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken" (Isa. v. 26, 27).

. . . . .

"Hiss" is a sharp noise to call attention, and obtain immediate response. The nation will be unaware why they are possessed with such a desire to return to their land, for they will go back in unbelief. They will, in the end, recognize God's gracious dealings with them in the days of their blindness and hardness of heart. The speed of their return is indicated by the girdle of their loins not being loosed nor the latchet of their shoes being broken or untied. The indication that none of the immigrants should be weary or slumber or sleep reminds one of the time when the Israelites came up out of Egypt, when "there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Psalm cv. 37). Something like this will happen again.

. . . . .

> "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and

the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isa. xi. 11-14).

. . . . .

"It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isa. xxvii. 12, 13).

. . . . .

Isaiah lx. contains a glowing prophecy of the blessing of Israel in the last days. Read the whole of its twenty-two verses, and let the closing sentence sink into your heart:

"I the Lord will hasten it in His [its N.T.] time."

. . . . .

Also chapter lvi. 17—24 cannot be fulfilled apart from the return of the Jews to Palestine.

. . . . .

"And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord" (Isa. lxvi. 19, 20).

Read to the end of the chapter, and note the doom of the enemies of the Lord.

. . . . .

"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together

out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers" (Jer. iii. 18).

. . . . .

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers" (Jer. xvi. 14, 15; also read xxiii. 5-8).

. . . . .

"Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jer. xxx. 10, 11; also read verses 18—21).

. . . . .

"Thus saith the Lord God: I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (Ezek. xi. 17).

. . . . .

"Thus saith the Lord God: When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given My servant Jacob" (Ezek. xxviii. 25).

. . . . .

"I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25).

The **then** shows how the people will be gathered in unbelief, and **when** in the land they will be cleansed and

brought to acknowledge their Messiah. Read the whole passage, verses 16—38.

. . . . .

"And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos ix. 14, 15).

. . . . .

"Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (Obad. i. 17).

. . . . .

"At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord" (Zeph. iii. 20).

. . . . .

"I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember Me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them" (Zech. x. 8—10).

. . . . .

The foregoing are but a few of the Scriptures that might be quoted, so fully do the prophets foretell the return of the Jews to their own land.

THE VISION OF THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

(Ezekiel xxxvii.)

In vision Ezekiel, who prophesied in captivity in Babylonia, was set down in the midst of a valley full of bones, and his comment on them was that they were "very dry."

The Lord God bid Ezekiel prophesy upon these bones, and declare that He would cause sinews to come upon them, and skin to cover them, and that breath should be put into them, and that they should live.

As Ezekiel prophesied there was a noise, and a shaking; the bones came together, bone to bone, the sinews and flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then the prophet is bidden to call to the wind:—

> "Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

The answer is given. The breath came upon them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceeding great army.

We are left in no doubt as to the meaning of the vision, and it becomes exceedingly interesting in the light of recent events.

The bones are said to be the whole house of Israel, that is to say those who are alive, but their condition Godward one of moral death. They say:—

> "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts."

Psalm cxli. 7, says:—

> "Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth."

The prophet is bid again to prophesy:—

> "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves [that is, from among the nations among whom they are scattered, and in whose midst they find a national grave], and bring you into the land of Israel . . . And shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live [that is, toward God], and I shall place you in your own land."

The above prophecy is deeply interesting, because much is going on under our very eyes which is leading up to its fulfilment. A few years ago a very distinct stirring of Jewish national hopes was publicly seen in the formation of the Zionist movement with the object of arranging the return of the Jews to their own land. The association was, and is, political and infidel.

At first the movement was scoffed at by most Jews. Little by little it gained ground, and its annual conventions in such places as London, New York, Berne, Berlin, etc., witnessed a rising tide of enthusiasm.

The unexpected happened. Hitherto the Jew had been forbidden by the Turk to own real estate in Palestine. The Turkish revolution took place. The Young Turk party got into power. The then Sultan was in want of money. The Jew was allowed to acquire property in Palestine.

Then began a steady flow of Jewish immigrants to their own land. Sea-ports were enlarged in capacity. Steamers brought their living freights to Jewish shores. Population rose. In 1827 there were five hundred in and around Jerusalem. By 1882 the population had risen to 24,000 people, one-sixth, or 4,000 of them being Jews. This steady increase continued, and has been greatly accentuated since the British Mandate came into being. Jerusalem in 1935 had a population of 105,000, Jaffa, 65,000, Haifa, 85,000. Tel Aviv, begun in 1907 with some sixty families, has grown by leaps and bounds. To-day it has at least 150,000 inhabitants.

Places that have a sudden influx of inhabitants, or a steady stream of increase, can generally explain the phen-

omenon. The discovery of a gold-field will bring about the former, the opening out of manufactories will account for the latter. In the case of Palestine there is no such explanation. It is GOD HIMSELF bringing bone to bone, sinew to sinew, and putting thereon a covering of flesh and skin.

Of course the Great War arrested this movement, and for the moment set things back, but only that the way may be opened out more than ever under the hand of God for the fulfilment of His divine purpose.

In what direction then has the tide of immigration turned? Mainly in the direction of agricultural colonies in Palestine.

This, too, is in fulfilment of a remarkable prophecy.

> "Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange [**foreign**, N.T.] slips: in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow" (Isa. xvii. 10, 11).

This prophecy was made over two thousand six hundred years ago. God had told the people plainly that pious conduct on their part would bring prosperity and safety. Israel, unlike Egypt, which was watered by the foot, that is, dependent on the river Nile and irrigation, was watered by the rain of heaven. If God gave bountifully the early and latter rain, prosperity was secured. If He withheld the rain, barrenness and sterility would be the consequence. Deut. xi. 10—17 brings this clearly before us.

But Israel went after other gods, and, above all, refused their Messiah, the result being that they were scattered among the nations, and the Gentiles possessed their land. The withholding of the bountiful supply of rain in a country whose soil is peculiarly dependent on rain, would easily reduce the country to barrenness.

We extract the following from the organ of the British Palestine Committee (issue Oct. 17th, 1917):—

> "Geologically speaking, Palestine is almost entirely built up of limestone of the Upper Cretaceous age. . . . If from the mineral point of view the limestone formation is a poor one, it is, on the other hand, full of promise from the agricultural point of view . . . No rock can, under the influence of Palestinian sun and heat, compare with the limestone in rapidity of disintegration, thus making swiftly available abundant new elements for the formation of a rich soil of perpetual fertility. No soil, more than the spongy calcareous soil, can be as quickly permeated by the heavy downpours of rain usual in Palestine and similar countries, and no other soil than the calcareous one has such a high capillarity, making available the inexhaustible stores of underground water for the deep-rooting plants of the arid and semi-arid regions. Thus a continual luxuriant growth is maintained under a glowing sun, an intense light, and a warm air, with not a drop of rain for six or seven months consecutively" (Pp. 93, 94).

Now it was the withdrawal more or less of the latter rain that has preserved the land for the Jew. On the other hand, the Jew has been preserved for the land. Spite of over eighteen centuries of dispersion among the nations, spite of untold persecutions and oppression, the Jew is more numerous to-day than in the palmy days of King Solomon. The Jew is the standing witness to the miraculous.

Such a phenomenon is completely outside the range of explanation save by bringing in the miraculous. Empires have come and gone; Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Roman Empires have risen and disappeared; but the Jew, more ancient than they all, still exists as a distinct nation, and that under circumstances that make his existence the marvel of the world.

When Frederick the Great of Prussia, the infidel friend of the great French sceptic, Voltaire, asked General von Ziethen, a Christian officer at his court, to defend his Christianity in one word, the courtly white-haired general

bowed, and replied, "Israel, sire"—an irrefutable answer.

And whilst God has been miraculously preserving the people for the land, He has been miraculously preserving the land for the people. By the withholding of rain the land flowing with milk and honey has been reduced to comparative barrenness. This is prophesied in Isaiah xxxii. 9—17.

> "Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear My voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto My speech. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins. They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."

And Isaiah xxxiii. 8 extends the picture of desolation:

> "The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth."

And this is just what has marked Palestine for years. The vintage failed, land went out of cultivation, thorns overspread the whole land, roads were practically non-existent. The lazy Turk could not, or would not, cope with the difficulties the lack of rain produced. In this way God has preserved the land for the people.

But of late years climatic conditions have altered for the better. In 1869—70 the rainfall of Palestine was 12.5 inches; in 1877—8 it was 42.95 inches. These were both exceptional years but the tendency is remarkable. The average rainfall now is 26.06294 inches. Both Berlin's and London's are lower than this.

We give an extract from **The Friends' Witness** (1912): "Dr. Grunhut, of Jerusalem, says that for centuries the land was partially barren for lack of the autumnal rains; but for several decades now these 'latter' rains have fallen (Joel ii. 21—23); and between 1860 and 1892 have increased the rainfall, Mr. Chaplin, of Jerusalem, tells us by sixty per cent."

Thus gradual return of the latter rain has encouraged the founding of agricultural colonies, of whom some seventy-three were established up to 1922. This number had increased in 1935 to one hundred and eighty-seven colonies with an area of 1,500,000 dunams. Up to the time the war began about 14,000,000 vine slips and fruit trees had been imported from foreign countries; since then very many more.

In 1890 an acre of irrigable land in the Colony of **Petach-Tikvah** cost about £3 12s. 0d.; just before the Great War broke out such land was worth £36 per acre.

This colony is the largest of all the settlements. It is situated eight miles north-east of Jaffa, and covers 8,000 acres, and supported a population of 3,000, when the Great War for the moment gave it a set-back. There are great irrigating works, and numerous schools, including one for elementary agriculture.

Vines, oranges, lemons, almonds, cereals are grown, and dairy farming is given attention to. The value of the colony increased from £1200 in 1880 to over £600,000 in 1914.

In 1882 the colony of **Rishon-le-Zion** (Arabic, Ayún Kara) was founded by Russian Jews. It covered 3,180 acres, and supported a population of 1,200 before the war broke out. It is the principal centre of the wine industry in Palestine. Baron Edmund de Rothschild built large wine-cellars, capable of storing 1,650,000 gallons.

Colonies of 1,270, 1,600, 1,360, 455, 3,570, 3,250, 500, 200, 625, 1,200, 435, 250, 700 acres, and many more besides have sprung up of late years, chiefly as the work

of Russian Jews. In a land about the size of Wales and with such a diversified surface, this bespeaks an astounding change.

Scripture is being fulfilled under our very eyes. In an article on the Jews in Palestine, the **Egyptian Gazette** presents the following picture:—

> "Where nothing but briars and brambles previously existed, we now see beautiful vineyards and fields of growing corn. The country generally is noted for its bad roads, but in the neighbourhood of the Jewish colonies excellent roads have been made, and the greatest order prevails."

We see how clearly the prophecy of Isa. xvii. 10, 11, as to the planting of pleasant plants [plantations, N.T.] and of strange [foreign, N.T.] slips has been literally fulfilled.

A little incident may interest the reader. A friend of ours in the little seaside town of Minehead, in Somerset, was seeking to convince a man of the the truth of the Bible. He said to him, "If you will come round to Mr. So-and-so's shop window [mentioning a wine merchant's name] I will give you a proof of Scripture."

In front of the shop window our friend drew the man's attention to Isaiah xvii. 10 and 11, and then to the labels on a row of wine bottles, which bore an inscription to the effect that the wine contained therein was made from grapes grown in Palestine, and that the vines were raised from slips imported from Spain.

We may ask ourselves the question, what effect has the Great War had upon the fulfilment of Ezekiel's vision? It undoubtedly for the moment set back immigration, agricultural prosperity, etc., etc.; indeed, it not only checked the flowing tide, but changed it into a receding one. But this was only for the moment.

It can be realized at a glance that once Palestine was delivered from the yoke of the Turk, the set-back has given place to a wonderful forward move, the like of which the Holy Land has never witnessed, not even in its best days.

Never will the writer forget the solemn and thrilling feelings that filled his soul when, one dark rainy night in December, 1917, he heard the newspaper boy crying, "Capture of Jerusalem."* He turned to his companion, and said, "Then the coming of the Lord for His Church is VERY near."

But the remarkable thing about it is that **before** the capture of Jerusalem Mr. A. J. Balfour, afterward Earl Balfour, should write a letter to Lord Rothschild, in which he stated the decision of the British Government to re-establish the Jewish nation in Palestine. This seemed like counting the chickens before they were hatched. But there was a very remarkable reason for this.

Dr. Ch. Weismann, a Jew, had been able to render very remarkable services to the Government and the Allied cause, and so great was the gratitude of the Government that they hastened to make this announcement, in acknowledgement of their indebtedness to him.

And how have the Jews received this declaration? We quote from the organ of the British Palestine Committee (issue Nov. 24th, 1917): —

. . . . .

> "Jews have aptly compared the Declaration with that Proclamation of Cyrus, King or Persia, which put an end to the first Exile."

. . . . .

> "No living Jew has known such a sentiment of exaltation from any political happening as the Declaration has spread throughout the hosts of Jewry. We should have to go back to the days of Ezra for the like. It is a re-birth. Every Jewish institution —synagogues, friendly societies, trade unions—is hastening to express its heartfelt gratitude, and to

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*A contemporary states: "The city of Jerusalem changed hands on a day of fate. The surrender took place Sunday, Dec. 9th, which in the Jewish calendar was the eve of the Feast of Dedication, which was celebrated year by year on the 25th day of the month, Chisleu, known among the Jews as the Feast of Lights."

> re-affirm its devotion to the British Government for this memorable act of national liberation."

. . . . .

And the feelings of exaltation stirred in the breasts of Jews within the British Empire, where they are treated with kindness and as equals, are mild compared with what must be felt by the downtrodden and persecuted Jews in Poland, Russia, and Roumania.

Further, there are the feelings of half a million Jewish young men, who fought in the ranks of the Allies, to be reckoned with. There was an association formed in the United States with a view to settling Jewish ex-soldiers in Palestine when the war ceased.

The Great War has given a powerful impetus to the Zionist movement. Now that the aims of that Society are seen to be practical, many Jews—especially those with wealth—have joined the movement. Vast sums of money are flowing through its agency in relief and exploitation channels. The United States, Russia, Britain, France, and Italy all witness to this.

Quoting from the organ of the British Palestine Committee (issue Oct. 17th, 1917), we read:—

> "At Moscow a company has been formed with a capital of 5,000,000 roubles to produce building materials and erect buildings in Palestine. By 19th April, 3,100,000 roubles had been subscribed, and it is understood that the full capital has now been got together. At Moscow a Colonizing Company with shares of 5000 roubles is making great progress."

And this in spite of the upheaval and unrest, that was caused by the revolution, is truly remarkable.

There has beeen a fight of late years as to whether German or Hebrew should be the language of the schools in Palestine. Such is the fiercely intense patriotic feeling of the Jew that pure Hebrew is once again becoming the common language of the Jew in the Holy Land.

It is interesting to trace the genesis and relation to each other of the British Mesopotamia and Palestine ex-

peditions, as well as the part they will play in the fulfilment of prophecy.

Neither expedition would have been taken if Turkey had not entered the war on the side of Germany. First, our interests in the oil-fields in the Persian region were threatened, hence the Mesopotamia Expedition. Second the action of the Turk in marching through Palestine to attack Egypt by way of the Desert and the Suez Canal, forced Britain to clear the Turk out of Palestine, and so secure herself a buffer state between the route to India and German influence, and secure herself from whatever eventualities might arise in the future from that directon.

Quoting again from the organ of the British Palestine Committee (issue Nov. 24th, 1917) we read:—

> "Over and over again in Jewish history we see the truth illustrated, that the whole of the country from Egypt to the Tigris is, in a military sense, one."
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Remembering always that the Palestine and Bagdad fronts are one, what light do . . . events throw on the fascinating problem of the Turkish plans?"
>
> . . . . .

Now let us see what light Scripture throws upon all this. We are all familiar with the expression, **The Promised Land,** but we are not all so familiar with its meaning.

Palestine is only a **small** part of the Promised Land, perhaps a tenth. Palestine is a country about the size of Wales, i.e., about one hundred and fifty miles long by fifty miles broad.

But what is meant by "The Promised Land"? Let Scripture answer:—

> "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites,

and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites" (Gen. xv. 18—21).

. . . . .

"Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea [Mediterranean], shall your coast be" (Deut. xi. 24).

. . . . .

"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun [Mediterranean] shall be your coast" (Joshua i. 3, 4).

. . . . .

From these Scriptures it will be seen how vast is the extent of the Promised Land. It will form a wonderful country, greater in area than any European country save Russia.

Those who are ignorant as to the extent of this country often ask how is little Palestine to sustain the Jewish nation, especially during the Millennium, when for a thousand years the birth-rate will undoubtedly be great, and the death-rate practically nil.

It will now be seen how Britain has been the unconscious, but privileged, instrument of God in clearing the Promised Land for the Jew. The Palestine and Mesopotamia Expeditions have done this.

We were being shown the other day the photo of a young soldier, who had fallen in battle in Palestine, and who was buried on the Mount of Olives. How vividly it brought before our mind the extraordinary chain of events that is bringing about the fulfilment of prophecy.

It appeared as if the falling out of Russia from active participation in the war had arrested the development of affairs in that direction.

The following extract from the organ of the British Palestine Committee (issue Dec. 1st, 1917) will show that

the falling out of Russia helped rather than hindered. We read:—

> "Among the 'secret treaties' published by the Bolsheviks in Petrograd is one relating to Asiatic Turkey. . . . It professes to be a record, in a memorandum dated 21st Feb., 1917, of an agreement made in the spring of 1916 between Russia, France, and England. . . . England was to have a special interest in the ports of Haifa and Jaffa; and Russia, France, and England were to have a joint protectorate over Palestine. 'A special interest' must mean in practice 'possession,' so that this alleged document provided for (1) a partition of Palestine, (2) a triple condominium over Palestine. In other words, for those two radically vicious principles, which we have repeatedly denounced and exposed, a Jewish Palestine, from which the only two ports of the country, Haifa and Jaffa, were sundered, could have no future. The life of a Jewish Palestine over which three rival powers ruled and intrigued would be, as Hobbes has it, nasty, miserable, brutish, and short."

By the falling out of Russia from the War this treaty, if it existed, lapsed; the British Declaration once and for all puts things on a basis that is on lines with the fulfilment of Scripture.

It will thus be seen how Ezekiel's vision is being fulfilled under our very eyes. The dry bones of Israel are stirring. The graves, that is the countries in which they are scattered, and notably Russia, which is indeed a living grave for millions of Jews, are opening. Sinew and flesh is coming upon the nation. The Jew is going back to his land in unbelief, full of ambitious projects for the realization of a future, which shall eclipse their past in glory, but as yet no breath of the Lord has come nationally upon them.

The bright hopes of the Jews cannot be realized apart from Christ. The bright beginning will soon be overclouded. Isaiah's prophecy will yet come true,—

> "The harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow" (chap. xvii. 11).

Or, as another translation puts it vividly:—

"The harvest will flee in the day of taking possession, and the sorrow will be incurable."

Palestine is rapidly becoming the strategic centre of the world. It will be the scene of much fighting in fulfilment of prophecy. Once the Jew is in Palestine, and the Roman Empire, the League of Nations, in existence, the world will soon see the First Beast of Rev. xiii. at the head of the latter, and the Second Beast of the same chapter, the false prophet, the Antichrist, as King in Jerusalem. Then when the seven-years' treaty is made with the Jew by the Roman Empire things will apparently look bright and rosy for Palestine, but in the middle of the seven years the treaty will be treated as a thing of nought, and then the awful tribulation will burst forth, as foretold by Scripture, ending up with scenes of war terrible to contemplate, including the battle of Armageddon and the siege of Jerusalem. The personal interference by the Lord will accomplish the deliverance of the Jewish remnant, and lead up to the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

Then shall be seen the effect of the breath of the Lord, and a nation shall be born in a day. The breath of the Lord will complete the process of national blessing.

The ways of the Lord are truly wondrous.

GOG AND MAGOG.

(Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix.; Revelation xx. 7—9).

The part that Gog and Magog will play is clearly indicated in these Scriptures. The identification of these names seems very plain. For purposes of clearness we set alongside the rendering of Ezekiel xxxviii. 2 and 3 in the Authorized Version and in J. N. Darby's valuable New Translation.

"Son of Man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

And say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." (Authorized Version).

"Son of Man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

And say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold I am against thee, O Gog, Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." (New Translation).

Gog is distinctly the ruler; the land of Magog, the people ruled; Rosh, we believe, stands for Russia; Meshech, for Moscow, the ancient capital of European Russia. One remarkable result of the Revolution in Russia has been the decay of Petrograd, and the transfer of the capital to Moscow. Tubal, we believe, stands for Tobolsk, the capital of Asiatic Russia, that is of Siberia.

In Russia there still live several million Jews. They have been terribly ill-treated and persecuted in that country for centuries. Russian "pogroms" against the Jews were notorious in their blind hatred of God's ancient people.

The strongest movement of the Jews to their own land has been on the part of the Russian Jews. This movement is likely to prove a second exodus. Just as the Israelites of old were ready to leave Egypt because of the rigour of the Egyptian taskmaster, so the Russian Jews will be glad to exchange their life of hardship and persecution, for

the freedom of their own land under the aegis of the British Government.

We need not wonder that God will punish Russia for all her persecution of His ancient people. Words cannot describe the sadness and evil of their lot, and it is but fitting and just that her punishment will take place in Palestine, and will unite two things: (1) God's chastisement of His people for **their** sin; (2) God's chastisement and overthrow of Russia's might in punishment of their sin carried on for centuries against His people.

Russia has gone through the throes of revolution. We expect in time a Czar of some sort will again sit on the throne, for the mention of "Gog, the chief prince of Rosh," warrants us in this expectation. We should not be surprised if Prussia, inhabited by Slavs and not by Teutons, should join hands with Russia in a future day.

Russia, with her enormous territory, man-power, and vast actual and potential agricultural resources, is capable of immense efforts, if rightly organized and exploited.

Ezekiel xxxviii. describes graphically how God will bring about the destruction of the persecutors of His people.

A great army with confederates such as Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah will assemble, and come like a cloud on the Holy Land.

At the latter end Palestine, relying on the plighted word of the nations, shall be resting securely within her borders. But an evil thought shall come into the mind of Gog. The defenceless condition of the country, its prosperous unwalled villages, its wealth in cattle and goods, will excite Russia's cupidity, and behind it Satan's implacable hatred against God's people will be used in furtherance of this fell design.

When this great army falls upon the land, God's fury shall come up in His face. A terrible earthquake will affright man and beast, mountains shall be thrown down,

steep places and walls shall fall to the ground. Jehovah will call for a sword, every man's sword shall be against his brother, pestilence, overflowing rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone will complete the work of destruction.

Five-sixths of this vast horde of warriors shall meet with their graves in Israel. Seven months will it take to bury their bodies, and cleanse the land. Men will be appointed exclusively to this gruesome task.

For seven years the abandoned munitions of war will afford enough fuel for the whole nation. They will not need to cut down the wood in the field, or in the forest, for that long period.

Thus God will testify to the nations that Israel's long dispersion among the nations was for their iniquity, that His power has gathered them into their own land, that He signally punished Israel's chief and most powerful foe upon the very mountains and fields of Palestine.

All this will occur at the end of Daniel's seventieth week, and at the close of the great tribulation.

The last verse of chapter xxxix. tells of God's Spirit to be poured upon the house of Israel, answering to Zech. xii. 10, as Zech. xiv. 1—5 describes the doom of Russia and the nations at this time when the Lord Himself shall intervene on behalf of His people, for how else could the little band of God's people stand against such hordes? It reminds us of the passage,

> "The children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country."

The geographical and climatic conditions of Palestine lend themselves to the fulfilment of Scripture in a remarkable way.

Years ago an Inspector of Fortifications and an accomplished geologist, Captain Hawes, was entrusted by the British Government with the task of investigating and reporting on the nature and conditions of the frontiers in Palestine.

As a student of Scripture he knew of the predicted earthquake of Ezekiel xxxviii. and Zech. xiv., and in the light of Scripture examined the district. He knew that whether the conditions of the strata were favourable or not made no matter to God. God is omnipotent, and can cary out His will whatever the conditions may be.

Captain Hawes wrote:—

> "Naturally my thoughts dwelt much on the prophecy in Zech. xiv., and as I contemplated the scene my 'official instinct' led me to consider the probable difference in the contour of the country where the valley would cleave. Having an intimate acquaintance with geology, I carefully examined the surrounding district, and was deeply interested to find there was a narrow, deep vein of strata of a peculiar character stretching in the direction of the Dead Sea. Following this up I took the trouble to ascertain that it continued in the same form the whole distance to the sea, so that it would need only the slightest tremor of the earth to bring about the cleavage of that great valley to the sea, thus making a channel for the living waters to flow in accordance with the prophetic word."

Then, again, the extraordinary configuration of the valley of the Jordan is unique. The Hebrew word for the river, **Yarden**, means, **The Descender.** It rises in three sources, the highest being 1,700 feet above sea level. These streams unite in the waters of Merom, which is only seven feet **above** sea level. Ten miles lower the river reaches the Sea of Galilee, which is 682 feet **below** the sea level. When it finally enters the Dead Sea, a further distance of about sixty-three miles as the crow flies, it is 1,292 feet **below** the level of the sea.

The Dead Sea is the lowest lake in the world, and at its deepest part is 1,300 feet deep, making the bed of the lake at that point 2,592 feet below the level of the sea. It is fifty miles long and from ten to twenty miles broad.

Its waters are far more salt than those of the ocean—100 lb. weight of its water will produce 41 lb. of salt; whereas the same weight of ocean water will yield about

6 lb. It is believed that the Lake covers the once fertile Vale of Siddim, and the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah, the guilty cities of the plain.

Scripture prophesies in Zech. xiv. of great physical changes to take place in the Holy Land as the result of earthquake or volcanic eruption. Living waters are to go from Jerusalem in two streams, one to the Mediterranean, the other to the Dead Sea,* the latter no longer to be destitute of animated life in that day, but teeming with fish. Wherever the living waters flow they will carry healing.

The contrast between that day and this will be a constant testimony to God's power, and the blessing of Messiah's personal reign. A traveller, Lamartine, observes of the Dead Sea:—

> "The shores are completely deserted; the very air is infected and unhealthy. The surface of this sea is transparent, it glitters, it pours upon the desert which surrounds it the reflection of its waters; it is **dead,** motion and noise are no more. Its waves, too heavy for the wind, are still, and no white foam plays on the pebbles of its shore; it is a sea of petrification."

It is believed that before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed the river Jordan flowed **through** the fertile vale of Siddim and **beyond** it. Burckhardt, who investigated the neighbourhood, obtained very satisfactory information, that, at the southern extremity of the lake, there is an opening leading into the Valley of El Ghor, which, with its southern continuation, termed El Araba, descends uninterruptedly to the Elamitic Gulf of the Red Sea, which it joins at Akaba, the site of the ancient Ezion-Geber. This is supposed to be the prolongation of the ancient channel of Jordan. There seems to be a fault in the geological

*But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt." God will thus afford an object lesson, even during the Millennium, of His judgment upon sin. This will be also seen on a larger scale in countries such as Egypt and Edom. (see Joel iii. 19).

strata starting at Mount Lebanon, running down the valley of the Jordan, and traceable as far as Abyssinia.

Seeing the tongue of the Egyptian sea is to be utterly destroyed, that the river thereof is to be smitten into seven streams, that men may travel dryshod as in the days of the Exodus, that there is to be a highway* between Assyria and Egypt (see Isa. xi. 15—16), and that great geographical alterations are to take place in the Holy Land (see Zech. xiv. 10), and that the Lord's feet standing on the Mount of Olives will be the signal for a great earthquake that is likened to one in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah (see Zech. xiv. 4, 5), we are prepared to read that when the seventh trumpet shall sound there shall be "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and **an earthquake,** and great hail" (Rev. xi. 19); likewise when the seventh vial is poured out, synchronizing, we believe, with the seventh trumpet, we read of "voices and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (Rev. xvi. 18), resulting in Rome being fissured into three parts, and the cities of the nations falling.

Great earthquakes have affected a single city like Lisbon, San Francisco, Messina, Tokyo, Quetta, and their immediate neighbourhoods, but this earthquake of earthquakes will level the great capitals of the nations, and will at once lay low the enemy's power.

As to the predicted "great hail," we have records of great storms of this nature in Palestine. On Feb. 8th, 1801, the hail, or **ice stones** were as big as large walnuts. The storm contiued uninterruptedly two days and nights. A torrent two feet deep swept everything before it. No human language could convey an adequate idea of such a tempest, reminding us of the Psalmist's words:

*It is not without significance that the British have linked up the Egyptian and Jewish railways already, so that the traveller may enter the train at Cairo, and travel by rail without a break to Jerusalem.

"He casteth forth His **ice** like **morsels**: who can stand before His cold?" (Ps. cxlvii. 17).

Whether we take the language as literal or "symbolic" to read of a hailstone weighing about a talent (see Rev. xvi. 21) bespeaks of something infinitely worse than what has ever been in the way of such storms, even surpassing the terrible storm detailed in Exodus ix. 22—26..

We believe all this can happen whatever the local conditions may be. Nothing can withstand God's purpose. But it is deeply interesting to see how God has been pleased to arrange that the state of things prevailing in that part of the world should present a silent, but eloquent, testimony that His Word shall be fulfilled.

All these things will usher in the Millennium, the thousand years of the personal reign of Christ.

. . . . .

THE **LAST** SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

When that reign ceases, and Satan is loosed again from the bottomless pit, and he goes out to deceive the nations and to gather them to battle in number as the sand of the sea, we find Gog and Magog figuring for the last time.

Then shall come the **last** siege of Jerusalem, when fire shall come down from God and devour His enemies, and destroy them in their final great offensive. Satan will bring up every man possible, he will hold back no reserves, in one last mighty act of hate he will hurl every ounce of power into the strife, only to be defeated once and for ever.

Then shall he be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet have been for a thousand years, the heavens and earth shall flee from the face of Him who sits on the throne, even the Lord Jesus Christ; the second resurrection taking place, the dead, small and great, shall stand before the great white throne and be judged.

The new heaven and new earth shall be created, and the redeemed shall dwell there; the lake of fire shall have for its occupants the triumvirate of evil in these last days, the beast, the false prophet, and Satan, as also the myriads of the lost.

Thus shall be ushered in the

ETERNAL STATE.

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF THE CITY AND THE TEMPLE; AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND IN THE MILLENNIUM.

CHAPTERS xl.—xlviii.

(1) PREPARATION for the departure of the glory from the temple ; (2) its departure (chap. x. 18, 19 ; xi. 23) ; (3) its return (still future); and (4) that which precedes and prepares for this last event, is a brief summary of this interesting prophecy.

The glory seems to depart reluctantly, and to pause at each stage as if ready to return should there be repentance on the part of Israel.

It is deeply affecting to see where the glory made its last stand. We read:—

> "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (chap. xi. 23).

Now the Mount of Olives is the mountain on the east side of the city, and Zech. xiv. 4 tells us this is the very spot to which the Lord will return, bringing in deliverance for His people, and the reinstatement of the glory. All hangs on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is indicated in the vision when we read,

> "Upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of **a man** above upon it" (chap. i. 26).

In a future day it will be no longer vision, no longer "likeness" and "appearance," **but the Lord Himself in person** shall fulfil all things.

. . . . .

Our remarks on the temple must necessarily be very brief.

There have been three temples; two are yet to come. The first and the last are the subjects of special instructions, especially the last, where the instructions are very detailed and numerous.

The five temples are as follow:—

1. Solomon's Temple.
2. Zerubbabel's Temple.
3. Herod's Temple.*
4. Temple to be built by the Jews when they return to the land in unbelief.
5. Temple to be built at the beginning of the Millennium according to Ezekiel's vision.

. . . . .

For situation, for beauty, for costliness, in its sacred associations, the temple was the most remarkable edifice that ever adorned this earth.

It bespoke God's dwelling among His people and the claims of His holiness. It afforded a central point of worship to God's people, and was typical of Christ in its whole conception and service.

Herod's Temple was completely destroyed, agreeing with prophecy of our Lord in Luke xxi. 5 and 6. In A.D. 70, Titus, the Roman general, endeavoured to save from destruction such a wonderful building, but the divine word had decreed its destruction. The Lord's word was completely fulfilled—not one stone remained upon another.

---

*Built upon the foundation of Zerubbabel's Temple, and so greatly enlarged and beautified by Herod, the Idumean King, that it was commonly called Herod's Temple. Hence the remark of the Jews: "Forty and six years was this temple in building" (John ii. 20). Dr. Edersheim writes: "But alone, and isolated in its grandeur, stood the Temple Mount. Terrace upon terrace its courts rose, till high above the city, within the enclosure of marble cloisters, cedar-roofed and richly ornamented, the Temple itself stood out a mass of snowy marble and gold, glittering in the sunlight against the half-encircling green background of Olivet. In all his wanderings the Jew had not seen a city like his own Jerusalem. Not Antioch in Asia, not even imperial Rome herself, excelled it in architectural splendour. Nor has there been in ancient or modern times a sacred building equal to the Temple, whether for situation or magnificence; nor yet have there been festive throngs like these joyous hundreds of thousands who, with their hymns of praise, crowded towards the city on the eve of the Passover." The sacred site covered nearly thirty-five acres of ground, occupying a gigantic platform, raised to the summit of Mount Moriah.

It is clear from Scripture that the Jews will rebuild their temple in unbelief. How terrible the situation when that building, speaking of Christ, and its service, typical of His atoning death in so many ways, shall be erected by a people who, with all the energy of burning fanaticism, refuse Him of whom it speaks, and apart from whom it would never have existed. It is said that large sums of money and materials have already been provided in view of the rebuilding of the temple; we know not how much the rumour is worth that the temple will be rebuilt on the Mount of Olives, as the present site has been desecrated by the presence of the Mosque of Omar, and moreover to remove that mosque to make way for the temple would arouse the bitter hatred of the whole Mohammedan world.

This temple, when rebuilt, will be the scene of the fulfilment of the Lord's words in Matt. xxiv. 15, when He confirms the prophecy of Daniel (chap. xii. 11) that the abomination of desolation shall be set up in the holy place, referring, we believe, to the setting up of the image of the beast by the Antichrist in the temple.

The contemplation of these temples that have been produces mingled feelings. The divine idea in the temple, as designed by God, can only produce feelings of holy joy and adoration. Such a presentation of Christ in this wonderful typical building can only rejoice the heart as we wait for it all to be fulfilled in the person and presence of Christ. What a rest of soul to contemplate this!

To contemplate the human side, how saddening! The bright days of Solomon were soon overcast. Idolatry marked God's people till at length Nebuchadnezzar, as the scourge of God, looted the temple, "burnt the house of God" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 19), and carried the Jews captive to his land.

Some seventy years later that Greatheart, Zerubbabel, set himself the task of rebuilding the temple. How different from the circumstances of Solomon were his. David had prepared materials in abundance, Solomon's king-

dom was at peace, his whole resources were available for the task.

On the other hand, Zerubbabel was head of a small handful of his compatriots amid bitter enemies. His resources were few, his handicaps many. We do not know of a braver or more courageous sight than that of Zerubbabel rebuilding the temple.

Then what a descent from the material splendour of Solomon's Temple and the moral splendour of Zerubbabel's when centuries later an Idumean king—and Gentile —should so enlarge and beautify the temple that is is described by common consent as Herod's Temple.

Alas! Christ, of whom the temple spoke, was a stranger in its courts. Its high priests and rulers were plotting His death. Could irony go further?

And can the contemplation of the Jews in bitter refusal of Christ rebuilding their temple in the near future awaken anything but sadness in the Christian mind? To think of vast wealth and great effort being expended over that which is to witness "the abomination of desolation" is terrible indeed. It looks as if any day we may hear of a beginning being made, an omen indeed of evil import for this world.

But sweet it is to turn to the sacred page, and see that shortly after Solomon's Temple was destroyed and before ever Zerubbabel laid the foundation of his, God gave this vision of the temple that is to be, that is to be built under such happy conditions, and have a longer and grander history than any of its predecessors. Then shall be fulfilled the Scripture:—

> "The glory of this latter house [literally: the latter glory of this house] shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai ii. 9).

. . . . .

Chapter XL.

Just as the Apostle John was carried in vision to "a great and high mountain" to see the holy Jerusalem, that is the Church in relation to Christ in the Millennium, so the prophet Ezekiel is set in vision upon "a very high mountain" in order to view "the frame of a city on the south," the earthly city of Jehovah, the spot to which the Lord shall come and from which He shall reign over His earthly people as their Messiah, and over the whole world as the Son of Man.

Passages such as Jer. iii. 17 and Zech. ii. 10, 12, prove that this city, Jehovah-Shammah (the Lord is there), is identical with Jerusalem.

It is very remarkable and pregnant with meaning that the city is mentioned in chapter xl. 2, and from that point till chapter xlv. 6 is reached we have no further mention of it. The five intervening chapters are taken up with a detailed description of the temple and its service.

Does this not prove that the city takes its character from the temple, in short that everything morally flows from God's dwelling place? In this way the temple and the city cannot be divorced, and, in a certain way, are looked at as one; that is, the temple is Jehovah's dwelling place, so is Jerusalem, the city of God. Its name is to be Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there.

. . . . .

Chapter xl. 5 introduces us to

"THE HOUSE."

We need not ask what this house is. It is "**the** house" of Haggai i. 8—"the temple of the Lord" (Haggai ii. 15), God's dwelling-place on the earth.

The wall is first mentioned, symbolical of perfect protection, the **exclusion** of all evil; then the gate, the **inclusion** of all that is right and good; then the chambers—not only does God dwell in the holiest of all, but there is room for His priests to dwell there too.

The arrangements made for the slaying of the burnt offerings, sin offerings, and trespass offerings show that even in the Millennium perfection is not reached, and there is this provision for relationship with God and holiness made for a people who are not incapable of sinning.

Chapters XLI. and XLII.

The preceding chapter gave us the surroundings of the temple; we now come to the temple itself. The door is its first feature. How reassuring that God should put **entrance** before us right away. Then comes the measurement of "the most holy place" and an elaborate description of "the many mansions" for the priests, such as were referred to in reference to the temple of that day by our Lord in John xiv. 2.

The holiest of all was foursquare, so was the temple as a whole, answering on the earthly side to the heavenly city when we read, "And the city lieth foursquare" (Rev. xxi. 16).

The whole sanctuary, including courts and outer wall, was five hundred reeds square, or a little over one mile square.*

Chapter XLIII.

The glory of the Lord will come from the east, the way of its departure as described in the early part of the prophecy. Immediately the verse goes on:—

> "And **His** voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with His glory" (verse 2).

The glory of the Lord filled the house, but it was in the coming of Jehovah Himself that the glory came. At this stage the man with the measuring reed in his hand addresses the prophet, bidding him:—

---

*In Herod's Temple the area covered was roughly an elongated square of about 1,000 feet. St. Peter's at Rome measures 613 feet in length, and St. Paul's Cathedral in London 520½ feet. Ezekiel's Temple site will be over five times longer than Herod's and over ten times the size of St. Paul's.

> "Show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern" (verse 10.)

If this should have the effect of shaming them, then he was instructed to show them the form of the house, its fashion, its goings out and comings in, its ordinances and its laws.

The altar then comes into view—that meeting place between man in his need and a thrice-holy God.

How significant that the first thing that is to be actually offered will be a **sin** offering. The altar itself must be cleansed for seven days, and on the eighth day, that day of an entirely new start, the burnt offerings and peace offerings will have their proper place.

Chapters XLIV-XLVI.

The east gate is to be shut, no man is to enter by it, because the Lord, the God of Israel, shall have entered by it. What a day of deep and holy joy it will be when all this is fulfilled.

In verse 3 we are introduced to "the prince," who has a position of special importance and glory.

It is interesting that he will bear the very title given by Ezekiel to the Lord Himself.

> "And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them" (chap. xxxiv. 24).
>
> . . . . .
>
> "My servant David shall be their prince for ever" (chap. xxxvii. 25).
>
> . . . . .

But that the prince of verse 3 is not the Lord is clear. He eats bread before the Lord and enters by the **porch** of the east gate, the gate that no man must enter by because the Lord Himself enters in by that gate.

The prince has a special portion for his possession, east and west of the holy oblation, an immense tract of territory, bespeaking the greatness and glory of his unique position (chap. xlv. 7, 8). The prince is to give burnt

offerings, meat offerings, drink offerings; his is the preparation of the sin offering, etc., to make reconciliation for the house of Israel (verse 17); his is to take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it on the posts of the house, upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court, and this is to be repeated the seventh day of every month for the one that erreth, and for him that is simple (verses 19, 20).

At the Feast of the Passover the prince is to prepare **a sin offering** FOR HIMSELF **and for all the people of the land,** proving conclusively that the prince cannot be the Lord (verse 22). He prepares likewise the burnt and meat offerings.

Whilst the prince is said to prepare his burnt offerings, etc., chapter xlvi. 2 tells us that the priests actually prepare them for him; and he worships at the threshold of the gate. Evidently from the position the prince occupies at the threshold of the gate, the same as that occupied by the people of the land, he is not of the priestly family, but will probably be of the house of David.

The glory of his position is seen in that he may return by the same gate that he enters, a privilege that is not accorded to the people of the land (verses 8-10). Up to verse 15 of this chapter is full of instructions for the prince.

Verses 16-18 give instructions as to the prince's conduct in regards to his sons and his servants when he shall give gifts of land.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A wonderful stream of water flows from the altar under the threshold of the house eastward, reminding us of its heavenly counterpart, the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne and of the Lamb."

But there is this difference. The heavenly river is purely symbolical of the stream of spiritual blessing that will flow **from** God and the Lamb **through** the Church.

This earthly river is an **actual** river with a **symbolical** meaning. That it is an actual river is clear from its description. Its start is from the altar, speaking of the ground on which God alone can bless His people, even on the ground of the death of His well-beloved Son.

That the waters flow from under the threshold of the house eastward speaks of the glory. It was by the east gate that the glory returned, it is from the east that the refreshing, healing waters flow.

So that the altar speaks of the righteous channel of the death of Christ; the threshold eastward, of the glory of His person and presence. It is all connected with Christ.

The waters deepen as they go; first, ankle-deep, then up to the knees, then up to the loins, then waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. What a stream of blessing (our apprehension of it deepening as we contemplate it) is that which flows from the death of Christ.

Whether spiritually or actually considered, the stream will be a blessing. What an outward and visible sign, carrying its own fertilizing influence, will this beautiful stream be to Israel and the nations in a day to come. Its source, its course, and its terminus will all proclaim loudly Jehovah's bounty and presence, and all blessing depends upon Him.

By the banks of the river grow "very many trees," whose leaf shall not fade, nor their fruit be consumed. The fruit shall be for meat and the leaf for medicine, reminding us again of the tree of life blooming in the heavenly city.

As the waters flow they carry healing virtues. How true it is that where the truth and light of God touch the soul they carry a healing and blessed result. But even its material effect will be life-giving and healing.

The Dead Sea, which has stood as God's witness to His abhorrence of sin, for it is commonly believed that the guilty cities of the plain—Sodom and Gomorrah—are sunk in its depths, will be healed. At present no fish can live in its super-salted waters, no bird flies over its dreary waste. At that day—

> "It shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers* shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh.
>
> "And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim [two places on either side of the Dead Sea]; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many." (Ezek. xlvii. 9, 10).

This wonderful river evidently starts from the temple, flows in increasing volume southward, through the holy oblation, as we shall describe later. That it will flow through Jerusalem is proved by Zech. xiv. 8.

> "It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea [viz., the Dead Sea], and half of them toward the hinder sea [viz., the Mediterranean]; in summer and in winter shall it be."

Leaving Jerusalem, the stream divides into two, travelling east into the Dead Sea—no longer the Dead Sea—and west into the Mediteranean.

But even in the Millennium the land will not be left without some witness to God's abhorrence of sin. Still speaking of the Dead Sea we read:—

> "But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt" (verse 11).

. . . . .

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE LAND.

From verse 15 to the end of our chapter we get the boundaries of the land as entered upon by the tribes at

*In the Hebrew this word is in the dual, referring to the two streams that shall flow eastward and westward from the holy city.

the beginning of the Millennium. Instructions are given not to treat the stranger as a foreigner, not even as a naturalized alien, but as one of themselves.

Chapter XLVIII.

Here we get the portions allotted to the tribes. These consist of equal strips of territory, extending eastward and westward.

When the Millennium shall begin the Jews will have been sadly decimated by all the sore trials they will have passed through, culminating in the great tribulation. Practically only a spared remnant will be ready to enter the Millennium. The land thus described by Ezekiel will suffice for their then needs, as will be seen in our map at the end of the volume.

As the population rapidly increases with no checks from death by violence or old age there will be ample room for expansion eastwards to the Euphrates, thus stretching their limits to the full bounds of the land as promised to Abraham (see Gen. xv. 18) and to Moses (see Deut. xi. 24), and which will never be fully occupied till Christ shall sit upon His own throne. Everything finds its fullest development under Him.

Life will stretch out to the full thousand years of the reign of Christ. Methuselah, the oldest of the patriarchs, came short of that. He lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years.

The day hastens when iniquity shall have an end. The reign of Christ draws nigh.

How evil will be judged is described in Ezek. xxi. 25—27—a passage which contains, we believe, a prophetic allusion to the Antichrist.

> "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem [the priestly mitre], and take off the crown [the monarch's diadem]; this shall not be same same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn,

> overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him."

It is interesting to see how both the pretensions of priest and king on the part of Antichrist are to be brought low. The threefold repetition of the word "overturn" is intensely solemn and emphatic.

Blessed overturning of evil in favour of the right. It canot be long delayed.

To return to details. We have seen how the twelve tribes will have allotted to them equal strips of territory east and west.

But between the territories of Judah and Benjamin is to be situate a strip of country 25,000 reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the other portions. This is altogether a new feature and of a deeply interesting and instructive nature. It foreshadows the great glory of the land in a future day, and of the intimate relation between holiness and happiness. This strip of country will give character not only to the whole land, but to the whole earth in the day of Christ's reign.

The letterpress description of this strip of territory will be greatly assisted by an examination of the diagram at the end of this volume.

Dr. Wm. Smith's **Dictionary of the Bible** says, referring to this strip of territory: "Each reed (Ezek. xl. 5) was six Babylonian cubits long, viz., of cubits each of one ordinary cubit and a handbreadth, or twenty-one inches. The reed was therefore ten feet six inches." (Vol. iii., page 1460.) Taking that as approximately correct, 25,000 reeds in breadth is equal to very nearly fifty miles.

The piece of territory is designated as:—

> "The offering [heave-offering,N.T.] which ye shall offer" (verse 8).

The sanctuary has to be in the midst of it, thus giving a holy character to it.

How this piece of territory is to be apportioned is as follows; A square of 25,000 reeds, viz., a portion about

2,500 square miles, is to be provided for the accomodation of the sanctuary, the priests, Levites, and city. All the territory east and west of this square is to be the portion of the prince, and a right royal portion it will be.

This square is to be further subdivided into three portions: two-fifths, that is, a portion of 25,000 reeds in length by 10,000 in breadth, equal to about 1,000 square miles, is to be allocated to the priests, with the sanctuary to be erected in the midst of the whole oblation; a similar portion is to be reserved for the use of the Levites northward. The remaining one-fifth, and most southerly portion of the square, measuring 25,000 reeds in length and 5,000 reeds in breadth, covering an area of 500 square miles, is to be reserved for the site of this wonderful Millennial city, and its suburbs, etc.

The city is to be in the midst of this one-fifth, and is to be foursquare, measuring 4,500 reeds each way, with suburbs of 250 reeds surrounding it, that is a total square of 5,000 reeds, covering an area of about 100 square miles. It will be built upon the site of the present Jerusalem, the terrible earthquake of Zech. xiv. preparing the ground for its erection. The two portions left in this one-fifth, on either side of the city, that is, strips of territory 10,000 reeds in length and 5,000 in breadth, covering together an area of 400 square miles, are to be utilized for the raising of food for those who serve the city, and those who serve the city are to be drawn out of all the tribes of Israel.

The city will be a worthy metropolis for the whole earth, the city, indeed, of the Great King.

A city 100 square miles, and 40 miles in circumference contrasts with the present Jerusalem proper, the circumference of whose walls is two and a half miles.

A question arises whether the priestly portion should be placed in the central, or in the most northerly portion of the holy oblation. Seeing that the sanctuary is to be

in the midst of the holy oblation, we have placed the priestly portion in the central place. Authorities are divided on this point, so we must leave it an open question.

Wherever the sanctuary is placed it must be at least ten miles distant from the city, a necessary arrangement seeing all the nations are to come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. The numbers will be so vast that only great spaces will suffice in which to control the traffic.

After giving all these instructions, and completing the allocation of the land southward of the holy oblation, we are told that the city is to have twelve gates, three on each side, reminding us of its counterpart, the heavenly Jerusalem.

With happy, quiet content Ezekiel ends his prophecy with the statement:—

> "And the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there [margin, **Jehovah-Shammah**]" (verse 35).

What more need be said? The goal towards which the suffering ages have travailed in pain and sorrow is reached. With the presence of the Lord, acknowledged as Messiah by His people, and as King of kings and Lord of lords over the nations of the earth, the golden age of the Millennium is reached. "The dispensation of the fulness of times" (Eph. i. 10), when all things shall be headed up in Christ, is come. What more need be said?

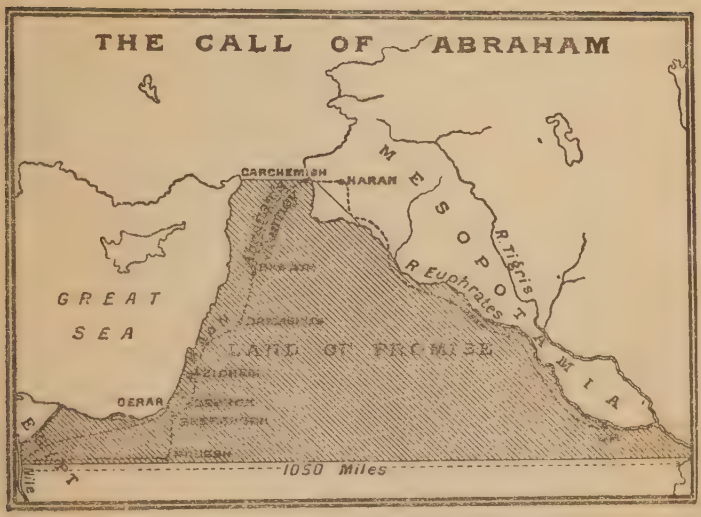
" THE LORD IS THERE."

. . . . .

Blessed be God, all the **moral** principles and glory of the Millennium will move on into the eternal state when

GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL.
(See 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.)

Then He will rest for ever in the complacency of His own love, and the redeemed will be supremely blessed for ever. Amen.



The distance from Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's starting-place when he received the call of God, to Haran, (or **Charran,** Acts vii. 2), is 600 miles.

From Haran to the border of Egypt, which was all traversed by the patriarch, represents a distance of 575 miles.

As Abraham could not have travelled in a straight line from point to point, the length of his pilgrimage must have considerably exceeded these distances.

THE GREAT SEA
CYPRUS
PHOENICIA
ARAM
HAMATH
OR
TADMOR
SYRIA
SIDON
TYRE
DAMASCUS
JOPPA
AZZAH
GAZA
DEAD SEA
EGYPT
ELATH
DOMINIONS
OF
SOLOMON.

BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
BLACK SEA
Phasis
Halys
Kur
CASPIAN SEA
Syr Darya
Oxus
CARCHEMISH
MEDITERRANEAN
DAMASCUS
JERUSALEM
EGYPT
PERSIAN GULF
Indus
RED SEA
Nile
ARABIAN SEA

MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE
BLACK SEA
Phasis
Kur
CASPIAN SEA
Syr Darya
MEDITERRANEAN
DAMASCUS
JERUSALEM
BABYLON
SHUSHAN
PERSIAN EMPIRE
PERSIA
PERSIAN GULF
ARABIA
RED SEA
Nile
ARABIAN SEA

GRECIAN EMPIRE
Danube
BLACK SEA
Phasis
CASPIAN SEA
Syr Daria
ALEXANDRIA
Oxus
MEDITERRANEAN
JERUSALEM
PERSIAN GULF
Hydaspes
INDIA
Nile
RED SEA
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Rhine
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Danube
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Tigris
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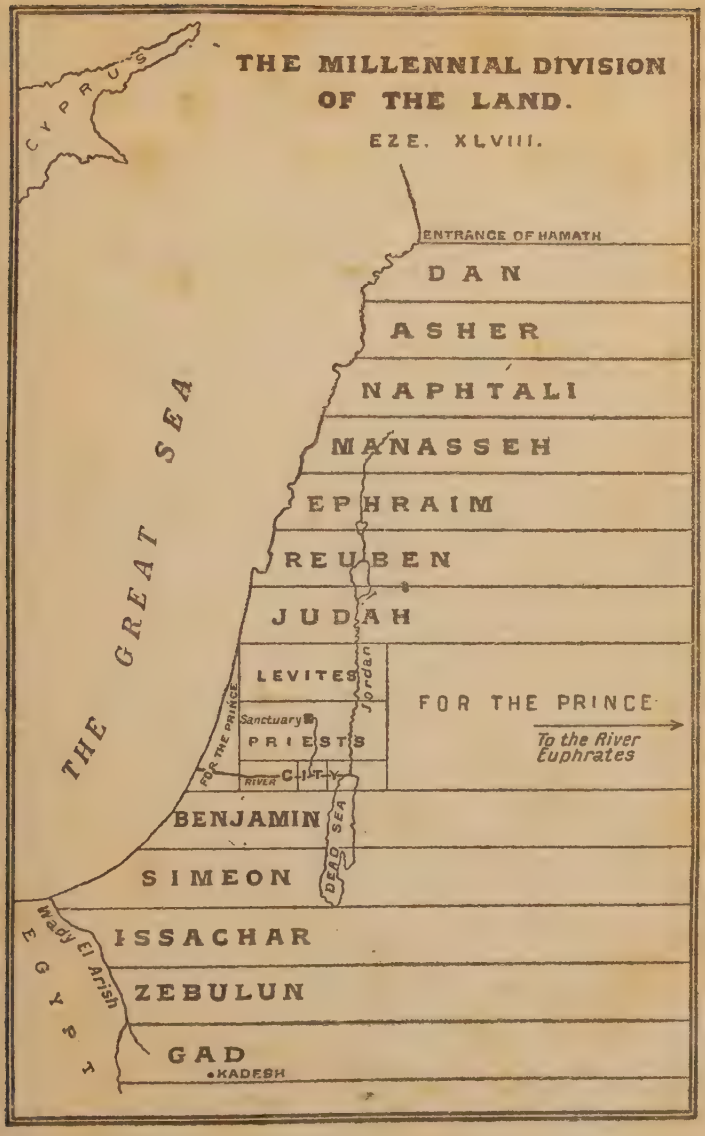
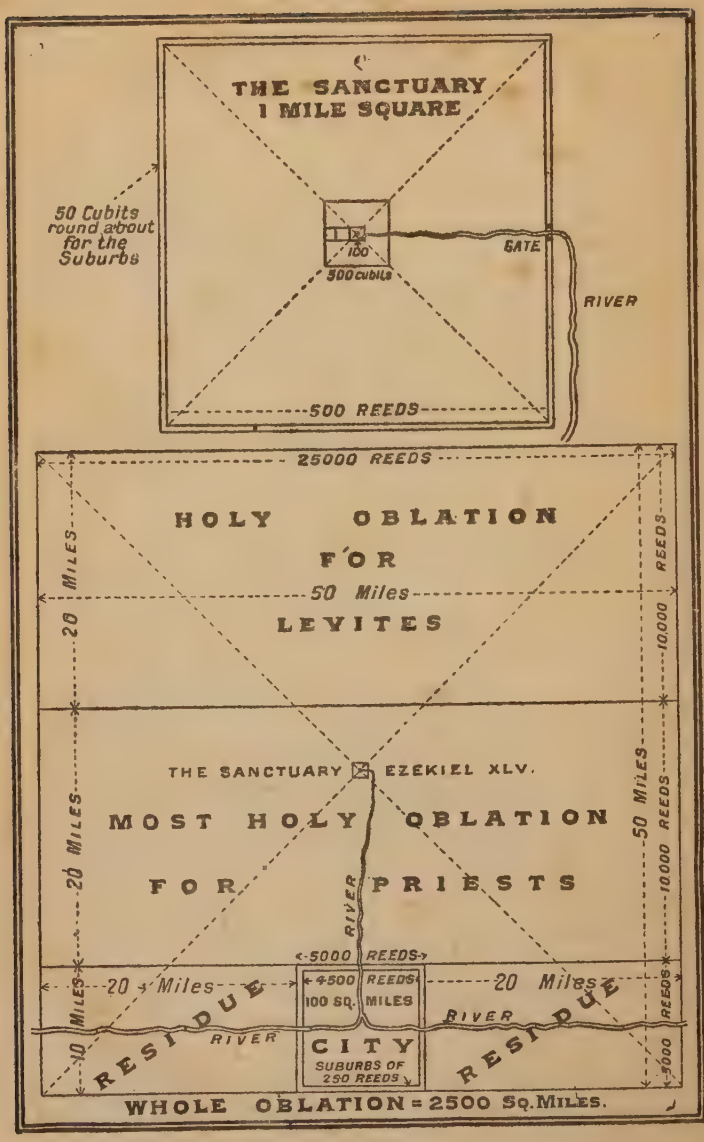
JERUSALEM
RED SEA
ROMAN EMPIRE


THE MILLENNIAL DIVISION OF THE LAND.
EZE. XLVIII.
CYPRUS
THE GREAT SEA
ENTRANCE OF HAMATH
DAN
ASHER
NAPHTALI
MANASSEH
EPHRAIM
REUBEN
JUDAH
LEVITES
Jordan
FOR THE PRINCE
To the River Euphrates
Sanctuary
PRIESTS
RIVER
CITY
FOR THE PRINCE
BENJAMIN
DEAD SEA
SIMEON
ISSACHAR
Wady El Arish
EGYPT
ZEBULUN
GAD
KADESH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